

 **Adventure & School Story** in this issue.

**JACK,
SAM,
AND PETE.**

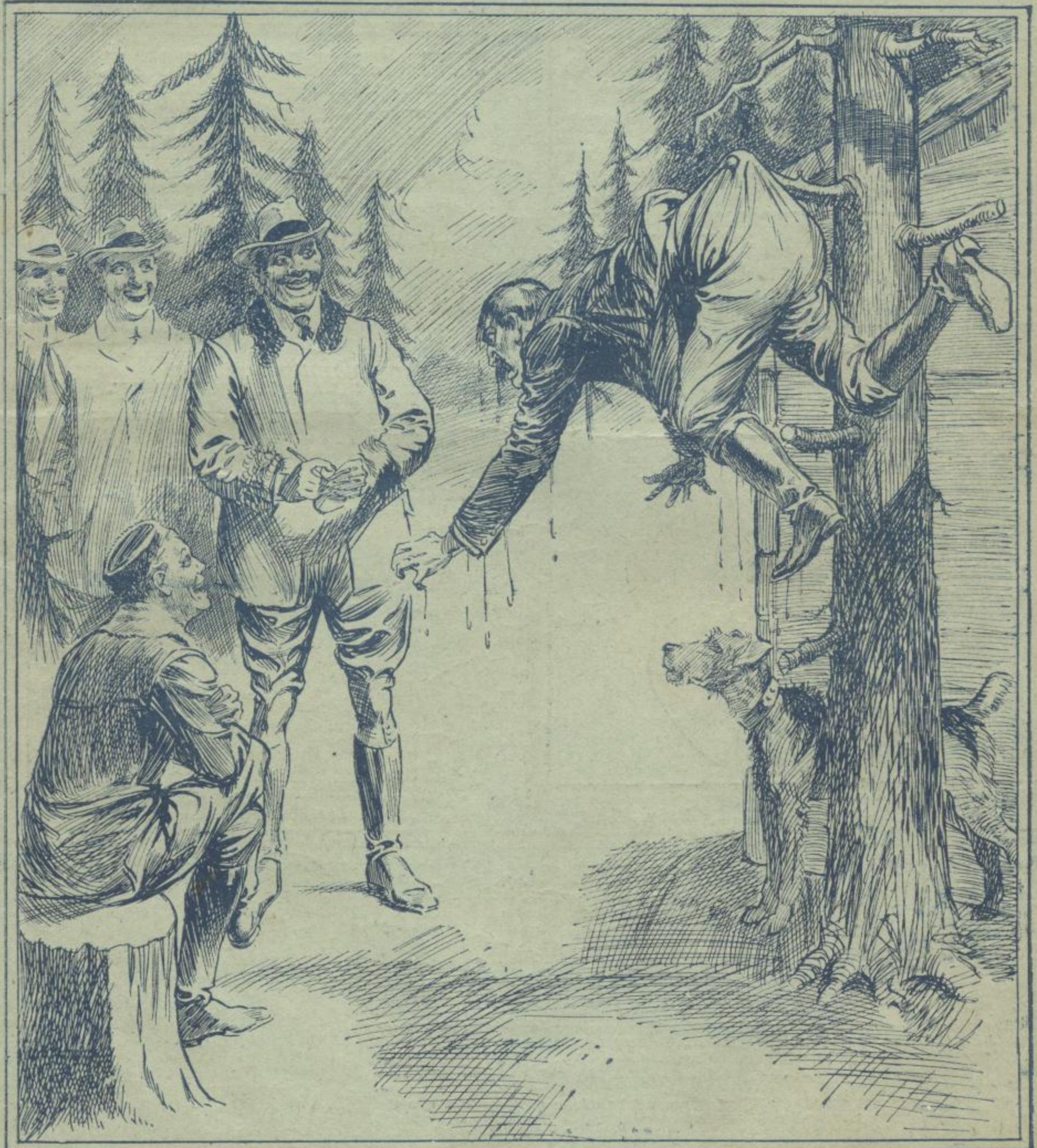
By S. CLARKE HOOK.

**THE
MARVEL**

1^D

**THE
CAPTAIN
OF THE
SCHOOL.**

By CHAS. HAMILTON.



Pete pulled out his pipe and commenced to fill it, while he gazed calmly at the victim of his joke.



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A TALE OF JACK, SAM AND PETE.

BY S. CLARKE HOOK.

CHAPTER I.

Pete's Lazy Mood—Jim—A Lonely Life—A Few Stories About the Beast—Pete's Bad Introduction.

THROUGH the vast Canadian pine forest a rich, clear voice rang out, and the wolves slunk away to their lairs, wondering at the unusual sound, from time to time uttering hungry howls, for winter was upon them, and the ground was hard with frost.

Great blocks of ice floated on the broad river that flowed through the forest, grinding against each other as the tide swept them on.

Clearer and clearer grew the grand voice, until the words of the boating song became audible, and now round a bend in the river swept a canoe. Three men were in it, and a dog was looking over the bows.

Even had the reader not recognised that rich voice, he would have had no difficulty in recognising Pete the negro as the singer. His companions were Jack, Sam, and Rory.

Now the voice died away, and Pete resumed his pipe, though he omitted to resume his paddle. Being in the stern of the canoe, and his comrades' backs being, consequently, towards him, perhaps he thought that they would not notice this slight omission. If so, he was mistaken.

"We would like a little more paddling and a little less smoking there," said Sam.

"But, Sammy, I can't do justice to my singing while I am paddling," observed Pete.

"You are not singing now."

"Nunno, Sammy; and I ain't paddling. You can't do two things at once properly."

"I reckon you are not doing either."

"You'm perfectly correct, Sammy. You see, I'm just deciding what is best to be done. To paddle, or not to paddle, dat's de question. Weder it be nobler to suffer from de pangs ob paddling, or to smoke de pipe ob peace, and leave de paddling to Jack and Sammy."

"Look here, Pete," laughed Jack, "Shakespeare never said that!"

"Nunno, Jack; but dat's what he tought last time I met him. Too many cooks spoil de broth, and I don't want to upset your beautiful stroke. Yah, yah, yah! Are you trying to gib yourself a shower-bath, Jack?"

"I came against a piece of ice, and my paddle slipped," said Jack, who had sent a shower of water over the canoe.

"It's de nature ob ice to be slippery, Jack. Dat's why dey use it for skating and sliding.

But what I can't make out is why dis sun don't gib out more heat. Here we hab got a beautiful bright day, and yet de frost is all sparkling on de ground and trees."

"Well, let it sparkle, and get on with your paddling!" said Sam.

"I am letting it sparkle, Sammy. It's doing it widout asking my consent. But wid bright sun like dis dat frost ought to get warm, and what puzzles me is dat it don't do anything ob de sort."

"Frost never does get warm in this country."

"Den it ought to, Sammy; and it ain't doing its duty."

"I wish you would do your duty and start paddling. The current is strong, and we are going against it."

"Den turn round and go de oder way, Sammy. It ain't any good you sitting dere growling at de current, and, what's more, I'm inclined to tink you are getting lazy."

"Well, there's one consolation, you can never get lazy, because you got that years and years ago."

"I wish you would keep your mind a little more on your paddling, Sammy. We should get along much faster if you put a little more exertion into dat paddling. It's no good dipping de paddle into de water and pulling it out again; what you want to do is to put some strength behind it. Now, try dis time! As hard as eber you can go! Hi, golly! Dat's my noddle! I don't want you to paddle on dat!"

"I thought I had struck a rock," said Sam, who had slipped his paddle out of the water and caught Pete a crack over the side of the head with it. "It sounded just like a chunk of rock."

"Well, my head ain't rock, and it has got feelings in it. It's a sensitive head, and if you'll listen to me for two-free hours I'll tell you some remarkable tings 'bout dat head."

"No, you don't, you beauty! If you don't get on with your paddling I'll splash you, and the water is fearfully cold. It will freeze on you. You will look like a black icicle."

"I dunno what we want to come to dese cold countries for!" growled Pete, seizing his paddle, because he knew that Sam would fulfil his threat, and it was not the sort of morning on which a man would care to be sprinkled with water.

"Why, we came here for hunting purposes," said Jack, "and for any sort of adventure that might turn up."

"Dere ain't much excitement in paddling a canoe against a flowing tide, when it's freezing 'nuff to turn compressed air into chunks ob ice."

"Hold your row!" cried Sam, dropping his

THE SECOND LONG, COMPLETE STORY STARTS ON PAGE 549.

paddle and levelling his rifle; then, ere it seemed possible he could have taken aim, he fired, and a moose that had come to the river-side fell lifeless on the bank.

"Golly! Dat looks like a substantial dinner!" cried Pete, using his paddle in earnest now. "Deer ain't bad eating, and I dare say I can find some mushrooms to go along wid it besides de damper we hab got. Row, brudders, row, and be sure you pull for de shore. Dat was an excellent shot, Sammy, and if you behave yourself properly you shall hab a good feed."

"But it is early yet for dinner," said Jack.

"Dere's no time too early for a good dinner, Jack. You don't know anyting about it; besides, by de time Sammy hab prepared dat animal, and you hab chopped de wood for de fire, why, it's bound to be later dan it is now. Come 'long, boys! Let's make ourselves busy. You can borrow my axe, Jack."

"I would prefer to see you use that axe," observed Jack.

"But I hab got to look for de mushrooms."

"I'll look for those while you are chopping the wood. Now, get on with your work, and let us see how soon you can get it done."

"I'd much rader see how soon you can get it done, Jack," said Pete, landing, and drawing his axe. "Still, if some people are so mighty lazy, I suppose de hard-working ones must do de work. It's funny what a lot ob work dere is in dis life, one way and anoder."

"I reckon you don't do much of it!" exclaimed Sam, starting on his job. And by the time he had got a good supply of the meat ready, Pete's fire was lighted.

He did not like chopping wood, but when he did make a fire it was always an enormous one, because he felt the cold rather.

Jack found the mushrooms all right, and they soon had a very good meal awaiting them. The keen air had given them very large appetites, and if the meat were tough, it was of excellent quality. Sam chaffed Pete the whole time as to the extraordinary amount he consumed, but that did not spoil his appetite by any means. He was the last to finish; and then, having piled up the fire to such a height that they were compelled to shift their positions further from it, Pete lighted his pipe, and commenced to argue with his comrades that it would be far better to remain there for the remainder of the day than to continue their voyage in the canoe.

Jack and Sam were not at all particular about going farther, and as they thought it likely they would get some sport at that spot, they readily consented to remain. Rory wanted to do a little hunting on his own account, and Jack suggested that they should start; but neither he nor Sam could get Pete to move from the warmth of that fire, so they decided to remain with him, and they spent the afternoon in smoking and chatting.

As soon as it grew dark Pete commenced talking about supper, and as Sam had an idea there would not be much peace until they got it, he prepared the meal.

They were just about to commence it when a growl from Rory caused them all to spring to their feet and hold their rifles in readiness; then they saw that there was no need for alarm.

A slimly-built lad of about fifteen years of age was standing amongst the bushes. He was a good-looking youngster, with calm grey eyes, and fair, wavy hair. His face was rather thin, but it was tanned to a healthy brown by the sun.

"You need not be frightened," he said. "I sha'n't hurt you!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "We ain't a bit frightened! Tink you would like some supper?"

"Why, I would, seeing that I haven't eaten anything since breakfast."

"What is your name, my lad?"

"Jim!" answered the lad, stepping forward and stroking Rory, who made friends immediately.

"We'm Jack, Sam, and Pete, travelling for pleasure. I see you are armed with a rifle and revolver; but ain't you rader young to be in dis forest alone? Dere might be savages about, and I happen to know dat dere are wolves, 'cos I hab heard dem yowling."

"Wolves I don't care for," answered Jim, eyeing the meat wistfully. "I am used to them. Savages are more dangerous; still, they never have killed me yet, and I've lived here all my life."

"What, alone?" inquired Jack, in astonishment.

"Not all the time, bother it! I'm all right when alone, but when that hulking brute Jakes comes on the job there are rows. You see, he pays me periodical visits, and then we have rows."

"Suppose you show dat man what's what?" inquired Pete, gazing at the calm youngster, who appeared to be paying more attention to Rory than the comrades' questions.

"Eh?" exclaimed Jim. "Well, you see, he is a bit bigger than any of you fellows, and he has got a temper like

a vexed rattlesnake. He has been away some time now, but I'm afraid he will come back. This is his rifle. He thinks the world of that weapon, and never lets me touch it. If I take it out when he's there he goes for me when I come back, and then we get hurt."

"Yah, yah, yah! Do you hurt him?"

"Generally. What a jolly dog you have here! What's his name?"

"Rory. But how does Jakes get hurt, Jim?"

"Eh? Oh, different ways. If I break loose, and I generally do, I chuck things at his head. Hit him on the nose with the heel of one of his boots last time I saw him."

"Did he like it?"

"He didn't seem to. I sent it hard, you know, and the heel caught him right on the nose; then, when I told him not to snuffle, he was so mad that I thought I had better come away. I knew he had to go in a few days, so I kept in the forest, and used to wake him up each morning to ask how his nose was; then he would come chasing me, howling like a gale of wind. You wouldn't like the man. He's disgusting. He will be mad because I have sawed off about a couple of inches from his rifle-butt. You can see it here. It was too long in the stock for me; but I can aim with it all right."

"Yah, yah, yah! He'll find it rader short, I tink!"

"Shouldn't wonder if he does. I say, that looks about ready. You are downright good chaps to stand me this feed, and I'll return the compliment if you come to the Beast's hut—that is to say, if he isn't back. I've been trailing a moose all day, and never got a sight of it."

"Perhaps that is the moose you have been trailing, Jim," said Jack. "At any rate, sit down, and we will have a good feed. Have you lived in the forest long?"

"All my life; at least, as far back as I can remember."

"Yet you appear to have had some education."

"Well, I could just read when I came here, and Jakes has plenty of books. When I get the chance I collar them."

"Is he your father?"

"I really don't know. I can't remember much when I came here. I remember living in some place once where there were other people, but who they were, I don't know. Then it seems to me as if I had forgotten something, for the next thing I can remember is being in the forest with the Beast."

"Yah, yah, yah! Is dat de name you'm giben him?" inquired Pete.

"Yes; he doesn't like it, either. I always call him that when he hits me, and that's about twice a day. But, you see, he can't run as fast as I can. At first, when he fired at me, I used to stop, then it struck me that if he really intended to hit me he could have done so, because he isn't a bad shot. Well, I thought I'd try. I had made him some coffee, and he was reading a book, and when he called for another mug, I slopped it all over his book and down the back of his neck."

"That riled him, and the show commenced. There was a bit of a chase round the hut, and I nearly brained the Beast with the coffee-pot. Then I thought I would try if he really meant to shoot me, and scooted, asking him if he had hurt himself, and working him up as well as I could. He came on, blazing away with his revolver, but not one of the five shots ever touched me. Since then I've had him on toast, and I have warmed his jacket, too. Yes; I have driven that man as near mad as possible. Once I tied him up while he was asleep, and flogged him till he howled for mercy."

"Yah, yah, yah! Was he pleased when you let him loose?"

"Why, you don't think I would have been so soft as to do that? He got loose, and then I got some of the flogging. I don't remember how it ended, but the next day when I came to my senses, I was jolly sore. Well, this is a stunning supper. I say, you chaps, the hut isn't very far from here, just where the river joins the lake. Why not come there to-morrow? We will sleep by the camp-fire to-night."

"We shall be very pleased to accept your invitation," answered Jack.

"I'm glad of that, Mr. er—"

"Call me Jack. Owen is my name, but I would rather you called me Jack. By the way, Jim, what is your name?"

"Only Jim. I haven't got another one—at least, if I have, I never heard what it was."

"Do you like this sort of life?"

"If it wasn't for Jakes I wouldn't mind it. You see, I've never had any other. I'm glad I met you. You are the only people I have ever liked. Well, no one could like the Beast, and beyond the few men he has brought to the hut, I have never met any others. Yet there are an awful lot, according to his books. It makes him mad when I read them, and he locks them up; but I always smash the locker open, and that makes him mad. No, thanks; I can't tackle any more. There's no need to keep watch, because I wake at the slightest sound. The beastly wolves kept me awake all last night. They can't get much food this time of the year, and

that makes them howl. If you don't mind, I will go to sleep."

Jim lay down at a safe distance from the camp-fire, and in a few minutes appeared to be sleeping heavily, but the moment the comrades spoke his eyes opened, so they remained silent; but later in the night once or twice they tested him by making a slight sound, and each time he started up, grasping his rifle. It was clear that a life in the forest had rendered his senses as keen as those of the keenest savage. Perhaps it was for this reason that Pete spent the best part of the night smoking. He knew that if he went to sleep his snoring would awake the lad, and, somehow, there was deep pity for this lonely youth, who had no friend on all the earth.

When Pete went to sleep towards early morning, Jim awoke, and, sitting up, gazed at him in wonder.

"My eyes! What a frightful row the man makes!" he gasped. "Is he choking?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No; snoring!" answered Jack, who was keeping watch.

"Stop dat noise, Jack, and go to sleep," murmured Pete. "Groo—"

"Well, I've heard Jakes make a row when I've chucked things at him," observed Jim, "but I never heard anyone but a wild Indian make a row like that. It reminds me of a savage's warcry. But he seems a jolly sort of chap, doesn't he? I suppose you picked him up in Africa? I've read about them. Funny row, too. I wish he was as big as the Beast. I'd ask him to thrash him."

"I suppose we three might be able to manage it for you?" inquired Jack.

"Eh? Well, that seems hardly fair. No; I don't think I would care for that. If one of you could do it, that would be a different matter; but you couldn't. He's as strong as a buffalo, though I prefer the buffalo, because you can eat them, and you couldn't possibly eat the Beast. Shall I get breakfast? I'm used to cooking over a camp-fire."

Jim set about his task, and served up an excellent meal; then, entering the canoe, they pulled up the river for about ten miles, where it flowed from the lake.

At the junction was a small though well-built hut, surrounded by pine-trees, one of which grew so close to the end of the hut that its lower boughs had been lopped off, and now stood out in spikes about two feet from the trunk.

The hut was quite close to the waters of the lake, and it would have been hard to find a more beautiful or wilder spot.

"There is no fear of robbery here," said Jim, opening the door with a key that he had in his pocket. "No one—not even a savage—ever comes here. You see, the Beast has not fitted it up badly; that is because he spends some of his time here himself. I rather fancy he is friendly with the savages, and possibly buys furs from them; at any rate, they never come here, so that he must do his trading at some other part. Now, I can't offer you anything; but we shall be able to shoot all we require to eat, and the Beast has a stock of coffee and things like that."

"But do you tink he will like us using dem, Jim?" inquired Pete.

"About as much as he likes you coming here at all. Oh, there will be an awful row, and he will go for me, then possibly he will go for you! But I suppose you don't mind that?"

"Nunno! We ain't at all particular 'bout dat. All de same, I don't tink we will touch his provisions. We will get what we want in de forest and lake. Should say dere would be plenty ob fish?"

"Rather! I've got tackle, too. Suppose we spend a day in the forest laying in a stock of provisions, and then tomorrow we can go fishing?"

The comrades agreed to this arrangement, and Jim considerably surprised Sam with the accuracy of his aim. He was so calm that he seldom missed a shot, and although his aim was never hurried, it was always remarkably quick. The few hints Sam gave him he listened to attentively, and even asked several questions; while some of the rows he described with the Beast caused Pete to roar with laughter.

It was growing dusk when they returned to the hut, and Jim, who led the way, flung the door wide open.

"Why, the Beast has returned!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

A very big man, of about thirty years of age, sprang to his feet. His appearance was decidedly good, and he stood as erect as a Guardsman; but his face was evil, and it was terribly fierce.

"I don't know who you three men are," he cried, in a voice tremulous with passion, "but this is my hut, and you will enter it at your peril."

"But see here, my dear old hoss," exclaimed Pete, "we ain't entering it. We'm outside, and I suppose we hab de right dere?"

"They are friends of mine," said Jim, meeting Jakes's

furious gaze unflinchingly; in fact, he did not show the slightest signs of fear, though the expression in the fellow's eyes was enough to have frightened a man, let alone a lad. "I'll entertain them in the forest. No; you don't!"

"Now, steady dere, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete, stepping in front of the infuriated man as he made a rush at the lad. "You ain't touching dat boy."

"You black brute of a nigger!" snarled Jakes, showing his teeth in his fury. "You dare—"

"Dat don't matter. We ain't discussing what I am. De point between us is dis. You ain't touching dat lad."

"And who will prevent me?"

"Dat's just exactly what I am going to do."

"Do you want me to shoot you?"

"Nunno! If you were to try dat on, I should do a little shooting. Den dere would be two ob us shot. If you like to try your fists on me, dat's anoder matter. Golly! Here he comes!" yelled Pete, bolting towards the lake, closely followed by the furious man. At first it looked as though Pete were actually going to spring into the water, but when he reached the brink he dropped in a heap, and, sprawling over him, Jakes plunged headlong into the deep water.

"Hope dat man can swim," mused Pete, shaking his woolly pate as he rose to his feet. "Life-saving in dat icy water ain't at all to my liking. M'yes, he can!" he added, as Jakes swam to the shore and clambered up the steep bank. Then Pete gripped him round the body, and bore him to the hut, relieving him of his revolver on the way. "Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Ain't dis man got mighty wet? Tink I'll hang him up to dry!"

Then Jim uttered shrieks of laughter as Pete seized the Beast by the back of his trousers, and hitched him on one of the spiky branches of the pine-tree, where he dangled something those sheep outside butchers' shops.

Pete pulled out his pipe, and commenced to fill it, while he gazed calmly at the victim of his joke.

"If you only stay dere for two-free days, old hoss," exclaimed Pete, "you will be as dry as a bone. What? Let you down? Why, what's de use ob letting you down before you are dry?"

"I'll flog you within an inch of your life when you do let me down," howled Jakes, making frantic efforts to free himself.

"Well, I don't see dat dat is any inducement to let you down; besides, it is most important dat you should dry, and you ain't nearly dry yet. It wouldn't do to let you catch cold, you know. Howeber, if you are so mighty anxious to be let down, I suppose de best ting is to obey your orders, and let you down accordingly."

Then Pete drew his knife, and, slashing at the back of Jakes's trousers, let him down with a run.

CHAPTER 2.

How Pete Ran Away, and How He Lived to Fight—How Jakes Wished He Had Not—Jim Does a Little Slap-dashing—The Prisoner.

JAKES'S fury was really extraordinary. As he rose to his feet, he looked more like a maniac than a sane man.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jim. "Give him another run, Pete. The Beast isn't safe when he looks like that. He says nasty things, and does them."

"You tink de man will hurt me, Jim?"

"I do really. Ha, ha, ha! He can't run very fast. I always bolt from the Beast when I get him like that, and he can never catch me."

"Den I tink I had better do de same!" exclaimed Pete, dodging round the hut, with Jakes in hot pursuit. "Do you tink he will catch me at dis pace?"

"No. Ha, ha, ha! Runs like a waddling duck. Go it, Beast! You are doing immense. All you need is a pair of bellows and a little more speed, then you would catch him to a certainty."

"How long do you tink he will be able to keep up dis pace, Jim?" inquired Pete, who kept slackening his pace until Jakes nearly caught him, then darting away at a pace that his pursuer had not the slightest chance of equalling.

"He won't keep on for more than a quarter of an hour. He is a short-winded beast."

"Golly! I ain't running for a quarter ob an hour," said Pete, suddenly stopping, and putting out a leg, over which Jakes sprawled face forwards to the ground. "Did you eber see such a man as he is for tumbling? Yah, yah, yah! Ain't he torn his trousers, too!"

Jakes leapt to his feet, but before he commenced operations he wanted to get his breath.

"I'll give you a lesson that you will remember to your dying day!" he panted. "I suppose you are relying on your friends to—"

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A Tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete,
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"ACROSS THE BORDER,"
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TWO

**GRAND LONG
COMPLETE STORIES.**

"We shall not interfere in any way," interposed Jack. "The only stipulation we make is that no weapons shall be used."

"You mean to say that you will interfere if I use a horse-whip?"

"Not at all. I don't call that a weapon. You can use that as much as ever you like."

"Steady dere, Jack!" exclaimed Pete. "I'm one ob de interested parties 'bout dat whip. I tink I would prefer you not to use de whip, old hoss; or, if you do, you might use it on Jack or Sammy."

"I'll knock you silly with my fists first!" declared Jakes, pulling off his drenched coat, and turning up his shirt-sleeves.

"Don't you fight him, Pete," said Jim. "He's a scorcher. Ha, ha, ha! You have made him look funny!"

This laughter only increased Jakes's fury. "I will flog you within an inch of your life, you little demon!" he snarled. "But, first of all, I will knock this brute of a nigger silly!"

"So dat's what you are going to do, is it, old hoss?" exclaimed Pete. "Bery well! Den de sooner you start on dat job de sooner you will get it finished. You ain't got de right, Jack, to gib him permission to use de whip, you know."

"But it would look so funny to see you being thrashed," laughed Jack.

"May be. All de same, I tink it would look funnier to see someone else thrashed, and I'm mighty certain it would feel a lot funnier. Golly! Here he comes!"

"Make another bolt of it, Pete," advised Jim.

"I'm most too tired to do dat," observed Pete, guarding Jakes's furious blow, and landing him one in the chest. The blow was not nearly Pete's hardest, but it was sufficient to check Jakes's rush, and it should have convinced him that it would have been wise to let the fight cease, a thing Pete would willingly have done; but the ruffian was in such a state of fury that he was reckless, and he fondly imagined that Pete was afraid of him.

Thus it was he went in with another rush, and a peculiar smile came over Jim's calm face. Pete stood with his legs a little apart, guarding every blow, and every now and then tapping his adversary in the chest to keep him out. Once or twice he varied this procedure by receiving a blow on the top of his head, and Jakes might just as well have struck a buffalo's skull for all the harm it did to Pete.

"Do you tink I am going to get much hurt, Jim?" inquired Pete, giving Jakes a back-handed smack on the nose.

"Ha, ha, ha! No! You are a scorcher. My eyes! I had no idea you could fight like that. I say, Pete, give the Beast a flogging. He has given me many a one, and I'll bet I've got the scars on my back, and that they always will be there."

"You tell me dat in all troof, Jim? You tell me dat you can show me scars on your back dat he has put dere?"

"I feel pretty certain of it. You can look for yourself."

"Bery well, den I shall hit him," Pete did. He delivered a blow in Jakes's chest that sent him winded to the ground, and for more than a minute the ruffian lay there gasping for breath. Pete knew that there would be no more fighting, and pulling out his pipe he lighted it.

"Now den, Jakes," he exclaimed, as the fellow struggled into a sitting posture; "de best ting you can do is to change your clothes. But I ain't allowing you to get any weapons, 'cos it's far better not to hab shooting on dis job. Come into de hut, Jim. It's all right. Dat man won't touch you while I'm here, and I'm inclined to tink dat he will neber touch you again. Dis way to London!"

"You shall not enter my hut, you black demon!" declared Jakes. "Who are you to come here interfering with me?"

"I'm an ordinary nigger called Pete; dat's my dog, called Rory. Dose oder two don't belong to me; still, I sort ob claim dem, same as dey claim me. We'm just comrades, and deir names are Jack and Sam. I will gib you any funder information dat you require, and I shall require you to gib me a mighty lot ob information before I hab done wid you."

"You shall not enter my hut, I say!"

"Den it shows you ain't as trooful as you ought to be. Come into de hut, Jim. Now den, suppose you show me your back, and I shall be able to decide what is de best ting to do."

Jim stripped to the waist. His back was not only cut up by comparatively fresh weals, but there were old scars. That the lad, whatever his faults, had been treated with abominable brutality no man could have doubted, and when Jack glanced at Pete's face he felt very anxious.

"Dere ain't a word to be said 'bout dis!" exclaimed Pete, after a pause. "It ain't a matter to deal wid by words. Nunno! Might use language dat I should be sorry for. Change your clothes, Jakes, unless you want to catch cold.

It's all right, Jim. We hab seen too much. I'm going to say nuffin' 'bout it; but I'm going to do someting 'bout dat matter. I ain't in a fit state to do it directly, 'cos my temper ain't exactly what I should like it to be. All de same, you'm going to be punished, Jakes; you'm going to be badly punished."

"Ha, ha, ha! Wouldn't I like to do a little of the lashing!" cried Jim, seizing a whip with a long thong; it was one Jakes had used on him on many occasions. "My eyes, I can't resist!"

As a matter of fact, Jim did not try to resist. He made that whip crack round the miscreant's body, and when Jakes rushed after him, Jim darted away, occasionally dodging and catching him cracks that caused him to howl.

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat's de way to serve him, Jim!" cried Pete, who knew the ruffian deserved far more than he received. "Gib him some good ones!"

"I am. Ha, ha, ha! How's that for one, old Beast? You didn't like that, did you? Crumbs! He's fallen. Now's my time!"

Jim could use that whip, and he did his work most thoroughly, as Jakes's yells testified. Before he could regain his feet, Jim got in three or four awful cuts, and he aimed at the tear in the trousers, while he accompanied the strokes with shouts of laughter, in which Pete joined.

"Think that is about enough for him, Pete?" inquired Jim.

"Yah, yah, yah! Should say dat would do for de present. Do you tink you feel as dough you had enough to go on wid, old hoss? Oh, it ain't any good yowling like dat!"

"I'll have vengeance for this!" groaned Jakes, glaring at the daring Jim, who kept at a safe distance, though he held the whip in readiness in case further castigation should be required.

"I say, Beast, I have given you a flogging, haven't I? Ha, ha, ha! You did seem to enjoy it. You look very much like you did when I hit you on the nose with the boot. Go and change your clothes."

"You see what a young villain he is," snarled Jakes; "and yet you take his part!"

"It seems to me dat it is you who am de villain," retorted Pete. "Dere ain't any question what you are when you hit a lad like you hab hit him."

"He deserved every stroke he received; and that is nothing to what he will get."

"He ain't going to get any more."

"Who will stop me?"

"Spect I shall not find much difficulty in doing dat; but we shall see."

"Look here, you chaps, suppose you stay here for a day or two? There's room in the hut, and the Beast will require you to control him for a bit. He is in a bad temper just now, and it won't make him any better when he learns that I have cut down the butt of his rifle to make it fit my shoulder."

"What?" roared Jakes. "You have done what?"

"I have only cut about two inches off it, and it has greatly improved my aim, though I must confess that it has not improved the appearance of your rifle. However, that is a thing that I don't mind in the least. I say, Beast, that is miserable language, and it really won't mend your rifle. I think it will be safer if I keep possession of that, then I shall be able to keep you in order after my friends have gone. You will find that I am not so easy to deal with now as I used to be, but if I live to be a man, I'll make matters warm for you. You will be losing your strength then, and I shall be gaining mine. Won't I just pay you! The thrashing I have given you to-day is as nothing to it."

Jakes entered his hut and changed his clothes. He had no more weapons there; at least, no firearms, and even if he had possessed any he would not have been able to use them against the three comrades. He was not very long getting into dry clothes, and as Pete entered the hut, Jakes peremptorily ordered him out.

"Well, you see, old hoss, I want to know someting more about you, and I ain't going to leave dis hut till I know it. You must expect a little punishment for your brutal treatment ob dat lad, and you are going to get it one way and anoder. In de first place, is he any relation to you?"

"You mind your own business. I shall give you no information."

"In dat case I shall take you prisoner, and hand you ober to de police at de nearest town."

"You are talking like a fool! I have done nothing, and even if I had you have no right to interfere. I should have you placed in prison."

"Shall take de risk ob all dat. You can consider yourself my prisoner; and I would advise you not to try to escape, 'cos Sammy shoots mighty straight. Jim can't remember anyting about his childhood, and I hab got de idea dat you

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brought him here, and are keeping him here for some money purpose, or else to hab revenge on someone. Now you can gib de information or not, just as you choose, but unless you satisfy me, you are going to remain my prisoner."

"You stupid, black blockhead! The young villain is my nephew, and I have had to support him all his life. He has behaved in the most fiendish manner, and has deserved ten times more floggings than I have ever given him."

"Well, I don't expect you hab told de troof; and you certainly hab got some cause for keeping dis lad here, and bringing him up like you have. Dose are de tings we are going to find out, and it is what you will hab to tell me, or else we shall gib you in custody."

"You can't, you fool! Do you think the police would take me into custody when you have no charge against me?"

"I dunno, but I am going to try dem."

"Are you going to leave my hut?"

"No, I ain't; and you must remember, old hoss, dat ain't de way to talk to your captor. You'm got to treat me wid de proper amount ob respect, seeing dat I am your superior."

"A vile nigger my superior?"

"Well, you see, I'm a sort ob superior nigger, while you are a mighty common white man. It ain't as dough you were ob eben decent breed."

"There are few in this land so highly born as I am, you insolent rascal!"

"Look at dat now! Should neber hab tought it from your personal appearance. Still, it wouldn't do to judge men by deir appearance. If dey had done dat wid you, you would hab been hung years and years ago. Nunno, Jakes. If I wanted to trust a man wid a sovereign, I should choose some oder one dan you for de purpose; but den dere's a great temptation to a poor man like you, who hasn't got a penny in all de world."

"I could buy up a hundred nigger slaves like you."

"Look at dat now. Made sure you must be poor. Funny ting I don't always guess right, ain't it, Jack?" said Pete, winking at him. Now den, Jakes, seeing dat Jim is well born, what's his name?"

"Jakes, the same as mine, you idiot!"

"I'll bet you five dollars it isn't. Yah, yah, yah! You'm a mighty fine liar, old hoss, but you'm a miserable actor, and for a high-born man like you are, you ain't got much intellect. All de same, I'm glad you hab told me dat you are well born, and dat you hab some money, 'cos dat's just what I was trying to find out, and I tought de surest way was to say you were low born, and poor—see? It's according to my cistern ob cross-examination. Sort ob work backwards. Now den, prisoner, you may get some food if you require it. You can consider yourself under remand, so dat dere's no restriction as to de quality ob de food, de only stipulation is dat you get it yourself, 'cos I'm too busy to wait on you."

"I'll soon show you the mistake you are making, you black scoundrel!" cried Jakes, looking somewhat uneasy. "You enter my hut like a thief, and you order me about as though I were a miserable nigger, and you the white man; but you will find you have made a very great mistake, and that before you are many hours older."

Then Jakes strode to the door, but Pete grabbed him by the collar and brought him back.

"Don't you be in such a mighty hurry, old hoss!" he exclaimed. "When I consider it is necessary for you to hab a little exercise I shall take you for it, but you ain't going out alone. You see, you might escape, and I ain't going to allow anyting like dat."

"You dare to prevent me leaving my hut?"

"Now I ask you boys if dis ain't mighty extraordinary. Here's a man who, as I keep telling him, is my prisoner—unless you or Sammy would like him—and yet he talks about daring."

"I don't want him, I assure you!" exclaimed Jack.

"I reckon I don't," said Sam. "I'd rather anyone on earth had charge of the brute but myself!"

"Den it follows he's my prisoner, and he ain't got de right to talk about daring. You ain't to mention such a subject again, Jakes."

"You silly vagabond, I shall say what I please!"

"Den keep on saying it, 'cos it won't make any difference to me; but you'm got to remember dis, de sooner you get someting to eat de safer it will be, 'cos I shall be sending you to bed shortly. 'Early to bed and early to rise, makes a poor prisoner healthy and wise,' as Wagglespeare says in his 'Prisoner ob Chillon.' Dat's right, ain't it, Jack?"

"Sure you don't mean Byron?"

"P'r'aps Wagglespeare copied him. Dere's no telling what dese poets will do, except get deir hair cut. Dey neber do dat, but p'r'aps dat's because dey can't get de sixpence for de job. At any rate, it doesn't matter to you, Jakes, who said it; de fact remains dat you hab got to do dem."

"I am not going to stand this scandalous treatment!" declared Jakes. "It is true that I am unarmed, and you three men have weapons; all the same, you will be made to answer for your disgraceful conduct!"

"You appear to forget your own disgraceful conduct in having treated that lad with abominable cruelty," said Jack sternly. "It is my impression that Pete will make matters very hot for you, and if he does, all I can say is that it serves you right. You are a disgrace to humanity."

"If you have any charge to make against me, you are at perfect liberty to bring it; but you are acting illegally now, as you must be aware, and I will have you severely punished for it. Once more, will you leave my premises?"

"Nunno, old hoss! We ain't going to do anyting ob de sort, and it ain't de slightest use you asking de same question ober and ober again, 'cos it's only wasting your time, and you ain't got so much to spare before I send you to bed."

"This is all your doing, you utter young scoundrel!" declared Jakes, turning fiercely on Jim, who was smiling at the proceedings.

"No, Beast," answered Jim. "I did not know what Pete was driving at when he got you to give him the information he required."

"You brought the scoundrels here!"

"I certainly did that, and the longer they stay the better it will please me, because you and I are bound to have a big row when they go."

"We shall have something more than a row, you little viper!" snarled Jakes. "Here, I've fed and clothed you, you little pauper, ever since you were an infant, or little more, and now you turn round and make these fools believe that I have ill-used you! You have dared to strike me with a whip—"

"Yah, yah, yah! And wid de heel ob a boot on your nose," interposed Pete. "Jim told us 'bout dat, and I must say I tink it was mighty funny. Are you going to hab someting to eat?"

"I shall eat when I want to, you black demon!"

"Well, I suppose you will do all dat, at de same time, you will hab to like-to eat mighty smart to-night, 'cos it's about time you were in bed. I can't hab my prisoners keeping late hours. Eight o'clock is your bed-time, and it only wants a few minutes to eight now. Should like to hab a look at your bed-room, to see dat you can't escape from it."

Pete took the lamp, and entered the inner room. There was a small opening, closed by a shutter, and Pete saw at a glance that it would have been utterly impossible for a man of Jakes's size to get through it. Then he went back to the other apartment, and, seating himself on the table, puffed at his pipe, while Jim appeared to be highly amused.

Presently Pete pulled out his watch.

"Go to bed, Jakes!" he cried.

"Dastard! I'll have your life for these insults!" yelled Jakes.

Pete put his pipe in his pocket, picked up the whip, and glanced sideways at his prisoner.

"Go to bed, Jakes!" he ordered once more.

"If I don't put a bullet through—Woohoo!" he yelled, as the whip cracked round his legs.

Then Pete got off the table, and administered a second cut. That was enough for Jakes. Judging by his extraordinary yell, it was rather more than enough. He rushed into the inner room to avoid a third one, and Pete closed the door, leaving him in the darkness.

"You'm got ten minutes to be in bed!" shouted Pete. "If you ain't in bed and undressed by dat time, dere will be some more whip. Mind, you hab got to be undressed—boots off and all dat. I'll tell you when five ob de minutes hab gone."

"I'm jolly glad of this!" exclaimed Jim. "Of course, he will make it hot for me when you go, but I'm pretty tough by this time, and I'll promise to hurt him. It's always better to do that, because it's a sort of satisfaction. I used to be afraid to do it some time back, but when I found he hit me as hard as he could, I thought it better to hurt him back. You see, it can't make him hit any harder—in fact, a good smash in the face generally makes him shut up, and take the rest out in threats; then if I bolt, he doesn't seem to like it. Next summer I intend to take to the forest altogether—the only difficulty is getting enough ammunition."

"Don't you boder yourself ober next summer, my lad," said Pete. "Dat's a long way off, and it ain't at all unpossible dat your circumstances may hab changed before den. We free men ain't exactly de sort to leabe a lad ob your age in de power ob a man like Jakes. Five minutes ob your time are up, old hoss!" shouted Pete, cracking the whip. "It will suit de regularity ob your cuticle if you'm undressed in de next five minutes."

Jakes appeared to be of the same opinion, for when Pete went into the apartment in the stipulated time, he found Jakes in his berth, with his clothes on the floor. These clothes Pete coolly took possession of, boots and all, and,

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having satisfied himself that Jakes had no more clothes in the room, he left it, shutting the door behind himself, and ordering Rory to keep watch.

"Ha, ha, ha! You've got him now!" cried Jim. "He can't escape without his clothes, especially if you keep the wet ones as well. Those are the only clothes he has got here."

"I shall keep good care ob dem," answered Pete. "Besides, Jack and Sammy will look after him if I go for a little walk to-morrow morning. Do rest ob de day, I sha'n't take my eyes off him."

"I reckon the nigger has got some idea in his woolly pate," laughed Sam. "Of course, it is no use asking him what it is. He would only say 'Eh?' and look as simple as a surprised owl. Nevertheless, we will guard him well, Pete, and if he 'exapes,' as you will persist in calling it, you can come and bullyrag us as much as you like."

"But you won't let him excape, boys?"

"Rather not!" exclaimed Jack. "We are just as anxious to see Jim out of this as you are. Besides, how can he possibly go if you keep his clothes?"

"I dunno, Jack. All de same, I'll keep dem in case ob accidents. His clothes will help make a bed for me, and as I may be going for a walk in de early morning, when lazy people whose names it ain't at all necessary to mention will be snoring in a dreadful manner, why, I tink I will turn in now."

Pete flung himself on the floor, and his snoring, which commenced almost immediately, rendered sleep quite impossible to Jakes, who protested loudly on several occasions.

"I must say it is a ghastly row," observed Jim, gazing in wonder at the noisy sleeper; "all the same, it gives me a sort of satisfaction to know that it is disturbing the Beast."

Before it was quite light, Pete was up, and his movements awoke Jim immediately.

"Do you mind my coming with you, Pete?" he inquired.

"Nunno! Bery pleased ob your company. We won't take Rory, 'cos I want him to keep guard on de prisoner. He might excape wid dese lazy chaps sleeping away like dat."

"I'm not sleeping," growled Jack. "I haven't been doing much of that all night."

"Den you ought to do so, Jack."

"It is rather difficult with you making a row like a badly-blown foghorn, and Jakes' howls at you to be quiet. It is almost impossible to sleep through the row you two have been making all night."

"Funny ting, I neber heard him."

"I'll warrant he heard you. But be off with you, and let us get some sleep now. We shall have breakfast ready by the time you come back."

Pete decided on taking his walk into the forest, and Jim conducted him to a very beautiful spot. There was a hard frost, and Pete growled a little at the cold; but Jim did not appear to feel it, and he seemed to be perfectly happy with his new friend, who asked him innumerable questions concerning his past life, though, unfortunately, Jim could give him no further information on that score.

"Seems to me, Jim, dat it would be as well for us to take in a little game," observed Pete, at last. "You see, it won't do to use Jakes' food, else he would be able to turn round and say we had robbed him."

"Well, I never take any notice of what he says," answered Jim; "all the same, we are coming to the prairie land, and it's not at all impossible that we might get a shot at a buffalo. I have frequently seen some of them, especially at this time of the year, and in the early morning."

"Do you tink it is far to de place where does buffaloes lib?" inquired Pete.

"No, it is quite close. I don't think it is five miles."

"Golly! You call dat close. Seems to me a mighty long distance for quite close; all de same, I suppose it has got to be done. Fire ahead, Jim, and be sure you don't make a noise when we get near de open ground. De wind is blowing towards us, so it's in de right direction for our purpose. Dis way to London."

About an hour's walk through the pine forest brought them to the open ground, then Pete uttered an exclamation of surprise.

On the outskirts of the forest on the broad plain was an Indian girl, and, charging towards her, at terrific speed, was an enormous male buffalo. It was so close to Pete that he could see its bloodshot eyes, as with angry bellow it charged down on the girl. She was armed with bow and arrows, and some spears; but that she could escape the infuriated animal seemed utterly impossible; nevertheless, she showed no signs of fear.

Drawing her bow to its fullest extent, she shot an arrow into the brute's shoulder, and although the weapon was true to its aim, the wound only infuriated the animal the more.

Pete fired every shot in his repeating rifle, and then sprang forward, while Jim also fired; but the bullets appeared to

take very little effect on the brute, which charged madly on the girl. It looked as though her death were certain; but as the brute was almost upon her, she darted swiftly aside, and shot a second arrow behind its shoulder.

With surprising speed the wounded brute turned, and, dashing at the unfortunate girl, hurled her into the air, while it waited until she should fall to complete its work of vengeance.

But now Pete was on the scene.

"Hallo, you dere!" he cried, drawing his axe. "Just you hab a turn at me, old hoss, by way ob a change, and don't you be so mighty rough. Nunno, you don't."

The buffalo did not appear to care whom it attacked in its fury, and with an angry bellow it charged down on Pete, who, leaping aside, dealt it a terrific blow on the skull with his axe.

Although the blow was delivered with all his strength, it had no more effect on the fierce brute's skull than it would have had on a block of stone. The buffalo turned again, and once more Pete leapt aside; once more he struck, but this time it was at the back of the buffalo's neck.

When Pete puts forth all his prodigious strength, something is bound to happen. It did on that occasion. The keen axe cut into the buffalo's spine, and the brute pitched lifeless to the ground. There was only one convulsive quiver, and then the great body lay motionless.

Pete's first thought was for the young girl's safety; but when he stepped towards her, she rose to her feet, and stood gazing from him to Jim in a manner he could not understand.

She was quite young, and her features were perfectly formed, while her dark eyes were very beautiful.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

"I am Pete, de nigger, my dear."

"I am Zadio, the red chief's daughter, and you have saved my life, for I was stunned by my fall, and should have been unable to move before the buffalo was upon me a second time. You are very brave."

"Nunno, my dear. Dere ain't much bravery in killing a buffalo."

"There is great bravery in attacking it as you did with an axe. You risked your life for me, and that is a thing I shall never forget. So this lad is Jim. He does not remember me, but I remember him very well. That does not matter. Can you cut some meat from the buffalo, then I wish you to see my father."

"Eh?"

"You need have no fear of him. That you have saved my life is quite sufficient to make him your friend for ever. Is the white lad a friend of yours?"

"Yes."

"Then you had better come, for it may be for his good. I cannot promise you that, because my father is very stern, and does not easily forget an injury, the same as he does not forget a good deed, such as that you have done for me to-day. Do you dare to come?"

"Suttinly, my dear. I ain't de least afraid ob your fader, at de same time, I don't want to go in for any fighting if it can be avoided. Are dere many who will want breakfast, 'cos dis animal is rader too heavy to carry, and it ain't any good taking more ob de flesh dan is required."

"It is only necessary to bring enough for four; the others can come here and get the remainder of the meat before the wolves have reached it. We have not far to go. Our encampment is just round the bend in the forest. I came this way alone, thinking to get some sport. My people have gone towards the north."

Pete had no fear that Zadio would prove treacherous, and so he and Jim determined to go to the encampment, and Pete was more anxious to do this, to learn what the Indian girl knew of Jim, and in the hope that she would be able to learn something concerning the lad's past history.

"I don't tink your people ought to allow you to come out alone like dis, Zadio," said Pete. "If I was your fader, I shouldn't allow it."

"You are not much older than I am. How could you be my father. Besides, how could you make me obey you?"

"Eh? I dunno exactly how I would do dat. All de same, I shouldn't allow you to go out alone. Dere's too many dangers knocking about."

"You go into the forest alone."

"Golly! I'm ob rader different size and strength to you, my dear. I am going to tell your fader he isn't to allow you out alone again."

"You must not do that, Pete. I can take care of myself. I like to go into the forest alone."

"Dere's lots ob tings children like doing dat ain't good for dem."

"I am not a child."

"Well, you ain't so mighty old—at any rate, you ain't old enough to go fighting buffaloes."

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"Well, come along. I shall ask my father not to listen to what you say; but I want him to thank you for having saved my life, and I want him, and our people, always to be friendly with you, in case one day they should meet you in the forest. You can see the smoke from the camp-fire now, and those on watch have already seen you, so that it would be too late to turn back."

CHAPTER 3.

Zadie Tries to Get Her Own Way—Pete's Prisoner Gets Angry—Pete Does a Little Thought-Reading In His Own Way—How He Reveals Jim's Past Life.

AS they approached the Indian encampment, Zadie hurried on ahead, and spoke some words to the chief, whose tall form towered above the rest of his warriors, and as he spoke he fixed his dark, flashing eyes on Pete; then the chief stepped forward.

"I am Yako, the chief," he said, "and I have learnt from my daughter how my black friend has saved her life. It shall never be forgotten. Let my friends come to our encampment, and join in the feast. My warriors have brought in plenty of food. So that is the lad Jim? It was Zadie who saved him from death. I spared his life at her request."

"You know something about him, den, Yako?"

"I know all about him."

"You feel sort ob grateful to me for habing been ob assistance to your daughter?"

"It is so."

"Den, see here, old boss, I hab taken a fancy to Jim, and it stands to reason dat I would like to be ob some sort ob service to him. Besides dis, he fired at de buffalo, and took just as much risk as dis child. Don't you tink, under de circumstances, you ought to tell me all you know about him?"

"I will speak to my father about that when you have finished your meal," said Zadie.

"Most things that you ask I grant, Zadie," said the chief, while an angry light came into his eyes. "You asked me to spare that boy's life, and I spared it; you must ask me no more! It was spared on one condition. I will do no more!"

"Not for the man who saved my life?"

"I will do for him anything in my power that he asks me, save that one thing. It would not benefit him."

"It did not benefit him to spare my life, and risk his own in doing it."

"Enough, child! I will not do it! Silence!"

"Of course, father, I know that I cannot be very much to you, and—"

"You are all to me—more than all!"

"And you will not do a simple little thing I ask."

"When Yako's vow is sworn it cannot change!"

"But it is fulfilled now. It was surely fulfilled long years ago. It is such a small request this black friend makes, and it was so much he did for me; then the boy helped him. He has never harmed you."

"Do you forget the past, Zadie?"

"No; I remember it too well. It does not matter, father. My life is of so little value. I am sorry, Pete. My father will not do what you wish, and as I must obey him, I cannot tell you what you want to know; all the same, I am very grateful to you, because my life is of value to me. It is not likely others could place much value on it."

"Yah, yah, yah! Neber could understand how women make men obey dem; begin to understand it now. All right, Zadie, you'm a good girl, and a cleber one, too. You fader will do what you want him to."

"I never will!" declared Yako fiercely.

"Yes, you will, old boss!" declared Pete. "You tink you won't now, but Zadie hab made up her mind dat you shall, and dat girl is going to get her own way."

"She always does; but in this case she shall not!"

"I'm inclined to back Zadie, old boss. Still, we will turn our attention to dis feast, 'cos we'm mighty hungry."

The feast was rather a long affair, for the simple reason that the appetites of the savages were quite as large as Pete's; but at last the meal was ended, and then the chief took a very friendly leave of Pete, although he showed no signs of relenting and giving him the information he desired. Zadie, however, walked some way into the forest with him.

"I will meet you by the river, close to where it flows from the lake, to-morrow soon after sunrise, and then I hope to have permission to tell you all you want to know."

"Yah, yah, yah! I knew you would succeed, Zadie!" exclaimed Pete. "Should like to know all 'bout de matter, my dear, if you can manage it for me. Ob course, I won't ask you to tell if your fader says you are not to do so; all de same, I rader tink you will get permission. Don't see how he could refuse anyting you ask him, and I fancy when

you marry it will be de same wid dat man; all de same, he will be a bery lucky man, 'cos you'm a sensible girl. Good-bye, my dear! I shall be dere to-morrow, wet or fine; only don't you come if it is wet."

"It will not be wet. I do not think it will snow, either. Good-bye, my brave friend! I shall never forget, and someone else will be very grateful to you besides my father."

Then, with a pleasant smile, Zadie tripped away.

"It's all right, Jim!" exclaimed Pete. "Don't say a word 'bout what has happened to Jakes; but I shall be mighty surprised if I don't make de Beast yowl before I hab done wid him!"

"I won't say a word to the fellow. But what do you think you will find out about me, Pete?"

"Dat's what I can't make out. I dunno what de man keeps you here for; but dere must be some reason, and I'm inclined to tink it is to hab revenge on someone. If it ain't dat, it is for money reasons. At any rate, dere's no sense in bodering ourselves 'bout dat, for dere ain't de slightest doubt dat Zadie will get permission to tell all she knows, and dat is 'bout all we want to learn. Did you eber see her before?"

"I never recollect it. Of course, I have seen some of the Indians from time to time; but they never did me any harm, and I had the idea the Beast was friendly with them, and that was the reason why he was not frightened of them attacking his place."

"Bery well, we will just get a little more ob dat buffalo flesh and take it in. Jack and Sammy will be glad ob it for dinner, 'cos we shall be a lot too late for breakfast dis morning. De best way is to say nuffin 'bout de matter to anyone till after I hab met Zadie to-morrow, den I will spring a surprise on de Beast. May gib a startler to Jack and Sammy, too, 'cos dey will wonder how I learnt it all, and I won't tell dem till afterwards. I like to get to windward ob Jack and Sammy. Yah, yah, yah! It does dem no end ob good to surprise dem, and it's a ting I'm rader fond ob doing."

"Well, you are a pretty fellow!" exclaimed Jack, when Pete arrived. "We waited breakfast an hour for you, and then our prisoner got so rabid that we had to have breakfast without you."

"I insist on being set at liberty!" cried Jakes fiercely. "To think that you three ruffians should come into my hut against my will, and actually keep me a prisoner, is beyond endurance!"

"You see, boys," exclaimed Pete, ignoring Jakes completely, "we got a shot at a buffalo; in fact, we got two-free shots at de poor insect, and he died; so we hab brought some ob de meat for dinner. Dat's de worst ob hunting buffaloes. Takes such a mighty time, and your hunger is apt to increase before it gets satisfied. All de same, when Sammy has cooked some ob dis meat, de satisfying part ob de appetite is bound to come."

"I intend to leave this hut!" cried Jakes. "If any man attempts to stop me, he will do it at his peril!"

"I rader tink I shall do it at your peril, old boss!" said Pete, locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket.

"You ain't going to leabe dis hut widout my permission, and as I ain't going to gib you dat permission—why, it stands to reason dat you are going to remain in dis hut, 'cos, as Byron says in his axles, 'Tings which are equal to de same ting so closely resemble one anoder dat you can't tell 'tother from which.' I ain't quite sure weder dose are his exact words."

"I am," said Jack.

"Well, it's lucky I misquoted dem correctly, and de fact remains dat Jakes remains a prisoner. I am going to defer my sentence till to-morrow; but I tink I shall gib you twelve months' hard labour, old boss! Meantime, you can consider yourself under remand, widout wickets!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I think you mean without bail, Pete?" said Jack.

"I believe you are right, Jack. I disremembered de word by cricket, and tink I took de wickets by mistake. All de same, dere ain't much difference, 'cos you can't take de wickets widout de bails, and as I ain't taking de bail, I tink de wickets were more appropriate. Say, Sammy, you'm a mighty long time cooking dat meat, seeing dat your fire in de stove was already lighted."

Pete's prisoner did not have a very happy day of it. He was taken for a little exercise in the forest, and as he simply refused to come back to the hut, Pete carried him back on his shoulders.

"He's de most troublesome prisoner I hab eber had to deal wid," growled Pete, shooting him down in the corner of the hut, much as though he had been a sack of coals. "Here I hab been taking him for a little exercise for de sake ob his heal, and it seems to me I hab had de best part ob dat exercise. Let's hab some more food, and den

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we will go to bed. I hab got a great experiment to make to-morrow in thought-reading. You see—it's all right, Sammy, it ain't got anyting to do wid fireworks—what I want to try to do is to read Jakes' thoughts, and den I shall be able to find out all he knows, which is exactly what I want to know.

"Where de difficulty comes in is dat he won't be a willing medium. Still, I dare say we can manage de ting somehow. I'm going to put him to bed early to-night, so dat he may hab a good night's rest. I like my mediums to be fresh, 'cos de work is rader tiring to deir brains, aldoth I don't tink Jakes has got one to tire. Don't laugh at de man, Jim, else you will make him cross!"

Jack and Sam did not get to sleep until early morning, and when they awoke they found Pete in the hut, while Jim was preparing breakfast. That Pete had been out for his morning stroll they guessed, but he gave them no information on this point, while Jim knew no more than they did.

Jakes was in a fearfully sullen humour. It is true that he ate the breakfast they prepared; but he would scarcely speak a word, and even when he did it was only to abuse them.

As soon as the meal was finished Pete pulled out his inevitable pipe, and by his manner the comrades guessed that he was going to give them a little fun. He looked so remarkably serious, and when Pete looks that way it is a sure sign that he is going to play some practical joke.

"De question we hab now got to consider, boys, is, can I read Jakes' thoughts? Can I tell you all 'bout Jim's life? It ain't an easy matter to do; all de same, it has got to be done, 'cos, don't you see, I want to know de exact length ob sentence he deserves before I gib it to him. Ob course, he may be a perfectly innocent man, 'cos, as we all know, appearances are deceptive. In dat case, we shall hab to disrelease him. Now, for de first question, Jakes! Why do you keep Jim here?"

"You have no right to question me, you insolent vagabond, and I refuse to answer any question you put!"

"Bery well, we will start on de tought-reading straight-away. De chances are de prisoner at de bar has got his toughts fixed on de past, concerning dis lad. M'yes! Nunno! You can't take dem off. You may tink 'bout half a dozen oder tings; but de fact remains dat your flow ob toughts are concerning de lad. His past, f'rinstance. Stop! Just gib a little tap to my head, Sammy, and—Woorooh, golly! I said a little!"

"Well, let me give it another tap."

"Nunno, you don't! Next time you want to do any tapping just you use a beer-barrel, or Jack's head! I want de brains collected, not scattered all ober de floor! I believe you hab cracked my cocoanut! Shoo! Silence! I'm going to put myself into a trance!"

"I reckon you'll look entrancing!"

"You shut up, Sammy! I'm going to frow myself into a trance, and look into de past. Now, what do I see? Shoo! What do I hear?"

"A voice, I expect!" came a high-pitched one apparently from Rory, who commenced to move his jaws, because he knew from a sign by his master that he was expected to take part in the performance.

"I see a fight; looks like white men and savages. De white men are losing; de foe are gaining—"

"Shall I bite 'em for you?"

"You shut up, Rory, and don't disinterrupt de speaker! One ob de chiefs is shot. De white men get away. A bery tall chief calls de dead man his brudder. He raises his arm and swears to hab vengeance. Golly! Why, here comes de Beast! M'yes! It's Jakes right enough. Mighty friendly wid de tall chief. Hark!"

"I will help you to gain vengeance!" came a voice, apparently from the roof of the hut. And it was so exactly like Jakes' voice that Jim gazed upwards in wonder.

"Funny ting dat!" continued Pete, in his natural voice. "Jakes is going against his own people. Shoo! Must listen to dis! Golly! De white leader's name is James Harvey, Jakes says. He's got a little son, and dey are going to steal him. Look at dat now! I wish you wouldn't make dat snuffling noise, Sammy; you put all de trance out ob my noddle! Dese tings move quickly in trances, and if I miss any part ob it dere's bound to be long breaks. Must be one here. Yes; quite a different scene. Little boy being stolen by Indian woman. Shoo! Noder change. Chief talking wid Jakes again. Golly! Jakes wants little boy. Why, it's you, Jim! Same face exactly; and de Beast wants you killed! Beautiful young Indian girl pleads for your life. Chief places his hand on her head, and swears de boy shall not be killed, and warns white man if he injures him, de Beast shall die at de stake. Jakes offers to take de boy to his hut, and bring him up. Little more scene-shifting here. Hut wid de Beast in it and de little boy. Beautiful young girl comes in de night to see if de

little boy is all right. Seems to be coming several times for de same purpose. Woorooh! I hab burnt my fingers wid my pipe now, and can't go on wid de trance. Must finish de rest some oder time. Ain't you well, Jakes?"

"Of—of course I'm well!"

"Dat's a mighty good ting, 'cos you don't look so remarkably gay. You look as if you had been sailing on a rough sea, and de motion hadn't agreed wid you. Do you tink what I saw is anyting like what happened?"

"I don't understand this rot at all. Who has told you all these lies?"

"Now, ain't de man horribly disbelieving? What's de good ob going into trances if people won't believe what you see? Seems to me it's only a waste ob time. Still, I dare say Jack and Sammy will believe some ob it."

"I reckon we do," said Sam.

"What do you tink about it, Jack?"

"Why, that we had better leave you to work it out in your own way," answered Jack. "According to your showing, Jim's name is Harvey, and Jakes instigated de savages to steal him. I need hardly say that we will help you in any way we possibly can to restore Jim to his home. The question is, how can we discover that?"

"Easy 'nuff dat. I shall make de Beast take us to it. Dere will hab to be a little more magnetic influence—and a horsewhip. Can easy find de road wid dose little auxiliaries. Hab you anyting to say, Beast, before I pass sentence on you?"

"I have had rather too much of your fooling. I presume that robbery is your motive. Very well, I have a hundred pounds here, and will hand you over that amount on condition that you go away, and never return here again."

"We ain't taking it; tank you all de same."

"You have not asked your companions."

"I ain't in de habit ob insulting Jack and Sammy, 'cept in fun; and dey wouldn't tink it funny if I asked dem weder dey were going to become scoundrels. Besides, dere ain't de slightest sense in asking dat question, seeing dat I know de answer to it. 'Spect dere's some more magnetic influence dere. De question I am going to ask, and which I expect answered, is, hab you anyting to say before I pass sentence on you?"

"You have been telling a ridiculous fable. There is not the slightest proof—"

"Neber mind about de proofs. We can bring dose in at de proper time. I see you hab nuffin to say, so de sentence ob de court is dat you be kept a close prisoner till de boy's fader is found; dat you help us find dat fader; and den dat you be imprisoned for de term ob your natural life according to de law, after you hab been proved guilty. So dat you may not be tempted to excape, I shall tie a lasso round your ankle, and lead you like dey do de pigs when dey want to take dem to market. You ain't to be flogged unless you lead us in de wrong direction."

"But how can you tell whether he is going in the right direction?" inquired Jim.

"Magnetic influence, my lad. Ebery time dat man goes in de wrong direction de current ob magnetic influence will strike me, and de horsewhip will strike him. Now, dere ain't de slightest hurry 'bout starting, so we may as well start at once."

"I reckon I am ready to start whenever you like," said Sam.

"The sooner the better!" exclaimed Jack.

"It's awfully good of you fellows to take this interest in me!" exclaimed Jim. "It is putting you to a fearful lot of trouble, and, I expect, some risk. If you knew the sort of life the Beast has led me all these years, you would understand how grateful I am to you for trying to get me out of it."

"Well, you see, Jim, we mayn't succeed, dough I rader tink we shall," said Pete. "All de same, weder we succeed or not, we shall neber let de Beast hab any power ober you in de future. Nunno! We know dat he's guilty, and directly de courts know dat dey are bound to lock him up for a mighty long time."

"You seem to forget that a court of law would want some other proof than the bare word of a lying nigger!" said Jakes.

"Ain't it funny how anxious de man is to learn what proofs I hab got?" said Pete. "But, you see, boys, dat is exactly one ob de tings he ain't finding out until de proper time. Now, den, Beast, are you ready?"

"I do not intend to leave this hut!" declared Jakes. "Nothing will induce me to do so. Stand back, fellow, or I'll knock you down! Fury! I'll stand this treatment no longer!"

Jakes grappled with his powerful adversary, but the next moment he was sprawling on the floor, while Pete stood over him, smiling.

"I dunno weder you would like a few more ob dose frows, old hoss," he said; "'cos you can hab as many ob dem as

you require. It ain't de slightest difficulty for me to gib dem to you; in fact, it is rader a pleasure. Get up and hab anoder one. Nunno! You don't seem to care for it. Well, p'raps it will save trouble if you don't. I'm going to tie dis lasso round your ankle, if you ain't got any objection. I shall need de assistance ob dis leg, old hoss. Hi, golly! De man has kicked me now. Funny ting dat I'm always getting hurt one way and anoder. If it ain't my flesh and blood dat gets hurt, it's 'most bound to be my feelings. Dat's de worst ob being hippopotamus sensitive!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You surely don't mean hyper-sensitive?" exclaimed Jack.

"Hippo-sensitive is de word. According to my cistern, I remembered it by hippopotamus, and I put in too much ob de animal. I ought to hab left his tail-end out. All de same, dere ain't much difference; and as you understood my meaning, Jack—why, it stands to reason dat oder people would hab done de same."

"Well, you see, Pete, I know a little about your cistern, and this gave me a clue; but I must tell you candidly that there are a good many people who would have been puzzled by the slight mistake."

"I don't know where you would be able to find more wooden-headed people dan yourself, Jack! All de same, I suppose dere must be some libing, only you always told me dat you neber had any brudders or sisters. Ob course, dere is Sammy, dough I tink his head is more ob de putty description dan de wooded one. Woo-hoo! Get off my toes, Sammy! I neber came across such a clumsy owl in all my life!"

"I reckon it is a strange thing I did not notice feet like yours!" exclaimed Sam. "Still, I'm sorry for the little oversight."

"So am I, Sammy. You hab trodden on de place where I might hab had a corn—just de corner ob de toe. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you hab turned dat toe black. Now, den, Beast; you'm de worst kicking beast I eber came across. All de same, de lasso is round your ankle, and ebery time you try to take it off I shall jerk your leg up—so; and, as you notice, dat causes you to fall on de ground. What you hab got to do now is—m'yes, here's de whip!—is to complete de second part ob your sentence, and lead de way to Jim's fader. Don't forget de strokes ob magnetic influence, else you are likely to remember de strokes ob de whip. One, two, free—go! Look at dat, now. De man won't budge an inch. Why, he is worse dan de most obstinate mule who would not go up de mountain-side. Go, go, go! Dat's moved him. I tought it would."

It moved him, for the simple reason that Pete accompanied his order with a cut from the whip, which he wielded with no light hand. Jakes expressed his feelings in inexpressible language. All the same, he went, and the comrades followed after him.

For about a hundred yards he followed along the river. Then Pete declared that his magnetic influence was giving him shocks, and Jakes got a few shocks from the whip, so he tried another direction; then two others, but they were all equally painful, so he took the right one, feeling confident that Pete knew it as well as he did himself. Jim guessed that Zadio had given Pete full instructions, and probably the address to which they were to go; but Jack and Sam could not understand it at all. They felt confident that Pete knew a great deal more than he had told them, but how he had gained that information was a mystery to them, and this was exactly what Pete liked to accomplish.

CHAPTER 4.

How Pete Took the Beast a Prisoner—Travelling Under Difficulties—Pete's Magnetic Influence—In the Depths of the Forest.

FOR the first few miles Jakes gave a great deal of trouble, but he found it become rather too painful, and so he merely abused his captor, as he found he could do this without any danger of the whip; but directly he turned in the wrong direction Pete would give him a stinging cut.

"Fury! Will you stop, you demon?" yelled Jakes after he had received one of these cuts. "I don't know what direction you want me to take; and, as a matter of fact, you have no right to make me take any one."

"We won't go into dat argument, old hoss!" said Pete. "As for de direction, I want you to take de right one, and you know dat better dan I do. But, don't you see, directly you take de wrong direction, de animal magnetism comes into force,

so does de whip. It don't matter to me which way you go, 'cos I'm mighty certain a few cuts do you all de good in de world, and it ain't de slightest trouble for me to gib dem to you. Fire ahead, and you can go a lot faster dan you are doing, 'cos I ain't a bit tired."

"Well, if you like to stop you can do so; at de same time, I must warn you dat it will be rader painful to you."

"We have been travelling all day."

"Bery well; dis is a forced march, and you are bound to march it."

"I'm tired!"

"Nunno, you ain't! I ain't tired yet. I shall be able to tell directly you are tired by my own feelings, de same as you can tell weder you are going in de right direction by your feelings. What we hab to do now is to follow de course ob dis stream, and we may as well do dat till it gets dark; den we will hab a rest and some food, if Sammy shoots something. He ain't been as busy wid his rifle as I should hab liked to see him, but p'raps dat is because he don't know how mighty hungry I am."

"I wish you were starving, you black beast!"

"I don't doubt dat for a moment, Beast; but, you see, I ain't quite so bad as dat at present. Sammy is bound to shoot something before so long, even if it is only one ob dose yowling wolves. Golly! Here comes de snow, and dat's a ting I don't like at all."

"We are going to have a blinding storm," declared Jakes; "and there is no shelter about here for miles and miles!"

"'Spect dese fir-trees will gib us all de shelter dat we need," observed Pete. "We shall light a camp-fire by one ob dem and cook our supper— Dat's de way, Sammy. You'm caught it first time. Young deer, too; dat ought to make good eating. I tink we will camp here for de night, 'cos dere's no sense in carrying dat deer fuder dan we can help. Besides, I can see dat you and Jack are mighty hungry, and I rader 'spect Jim is de same way fixed; while Rory is pretending to go lame, and dat is a sure sign dat he is bof tired and hungry. Now, where could you get a nicer tree dan dis one! Shall be quite safe from de snow here, and I will pile up some branches to keep off de wind. Just you hold de Beast by its string, Jim; and if he tries to fly at you all you hab to do is to gib a jerk to de lasso, and ober he goes. It's de simplest ting in de world."

"I'll hold him!" cried Jim, who wanted nothing better. "It will remind me of fishing, and I'm very fond of that. Now, then, Beast, mind you behave yourself, or— Ah, would you?"

The infuriated man made a rush at Jim, who darted sideways, and, jerking up his leg, brought him to the ground; and when he had a try to unfasten the lasso, Pete having taken away his knife, Jim got the rope over his shoulder, and dragged Jakes along the ground until he made him howl, for there were some brambles about that part.

"Now, see here, Beast!" cried Jim. "I'm not going to allow you to get up. If you do I shall jerk you head over heels each time. Well, if you catch hold of the rope like that, I think you will find that I have got the whip-hand."

Jakes had not a chance. When he leant forward to grasp the lasso with his hands, Jim jerked him over with the greatest ease.

"Only wait till I get at you, you little villain!" stormed the angry man.

"I don't mind how long I wait for that, Beast. Ha, ha, ha! You will get cold if you go rolling in the snow like that. I say, Pete, did you ever see such a funny-looking idiot?"

"Yah, yah, yah! De man certainly looks remarkably funny. Still, if you laugh at him you may make him cross. Keep on jerking him about while I'm chopping de wood for de fire. Dere's a dead pine here dat will do famously for dat purpose."

Jim seemed to enjoy the fun immensely. Jakes made several attempts to get up; but, finding it impossible, he remained seated in the snow, and uttered every threat that he could think of, but all his threats failed to frighten Jim, who only laughed at him.

Having lighted his fire, Pete cut vast quantities of bushes which he piled up to protect them from the wind, for it was blowing keenly from the north, and the night promised to be bitterly cold. Next Pete went to find some edible roots, for, although they had a supply of damper, he always liked to have something else with his meat.

"Now, I tink we hab got de groundwork ob a good supper!" he exclaimed, when the meat was just upon done. "It's a pity we could not bring our canoe, 'cos dere are one or two tings

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in it dat might help out de supper. All de same, dis little lot ain't to be grumbled at. Cheer up, old hoss! You'm going to hab your share ob dis, and you had best make de best ob it, 'cos it is a lot better fare dan you will get when you are in prison. You had better sit next to me, 'cos you might feel as dough you would like to hit Jim. Ob course, if you feel like hitting me, dat won't do any harm. Now, den, Sammy, dat meat is cooked quite enough. We don't want it burnt up to cinders."

"This is what I call jolly!" exclaimed Jim. "I always did like a life in the forest; perhaps that's because I can't remember any cther. The only drawback to it was that I was always alone, or else with the Beast, which is far worse than being alone. Come on, Rory! I've got plenty here for you. You are a jolly little fellow, I must say. If you are as hungry as I am, old chap, we shall make good suppers."

"Dere's some meat for de Beast; but, look here, old hoss, you will hab to eat it wid your fingers!"

"How do you expect he is going to do that?" inquired Sam.

"He will hab to, Sammy."

"All right. If you have made up your mind he has got to eat it with his fingers, I suppose it is no good arguing the point; personally, I should have thought his mouth was the more appropriate thing to eat with. I don't see how he can possibly eat meat with his fingers."

"Eh?"

"I have no intention of repeating that observation."

"I meant his mouf, Sammy."

"Then you should say what you mean. There is a great difference between a man's fingers and his mouth. You see, on his fingers he wears nails, and in his mouth he wears teeth. I would like you to understand how great this difference is. He has a tongue in his mouth, and the mouth is used for eating purposes."

"Golly! Seems to me yours is used for talking purposes, Sammy. I neber came across a man who could gabble away wid his mouf like you can. Gib him a chunk ob deer flesh, Jack, p'r'aps dat will stop de flow ob his language, oderwise we shall hab de man talking all night and saying nuffin. M'yes! Dat was a mighty moufful, Sammy. Mind you don't choke yourself. You'm got to remember dat your froat ain't so large as de entrance to your mouf. Yah, yah, yah! I believe de man has burnt himself dis time, else he's got a bone in his froat. Stop a bit, Sammy; I will ram it down wid de handle ob my axe. Yah, yah, yah! It's someting like charging an old muzzle-loading cannon."

"Phew! That meat was hot!" gasped Sam.

"Meat often is when it has been roasting in front ob a big fire; but you'm got de consolation ob knowing dat it's bound to get cooler in time. But p'r'aps when you hab done fooling you will turn your attention to de Beast. De lowest beast on de face ob dis earth requires food, and, seeing dat Jakes comes under dat category—got dat word right dis time, Jack—it stands to reason he must hab food."

"Give me a knife to cut it with, you black beast!" snarled Jakes, who was far too hungry to refuse the food.

"You ain't going to hab a knife. You might get sticking it into Jack or Sammy, and dose men don't require bleeding. Nunno! You eat dat meat de way I tell you!"

Jakes had to obey, and, in spite of the awkward circumstances and his rage, he managed to make a very good supper; while as for Pete, he went on until Jim thought he would never finish.

"Now, boys all, we'll pile up de fire, for as Walter Burns says in 'Vanity Fair,' 'De wind blows cold, de wind blows chill; but let it whistle as it will, we'll keep our trilbies warming still.'"

"Great Scott! You will make him turn in his grave if you misquote him like that, Pete! The only consolation he will have is that you attribute the misquotation to someone else."

"I can't help dat, Jack. Poets ought to put deir names to each piece ob poetry and den burn it. We'm going to keep as warm to-night as circumstances will permit."

Pete piled up the fire to an enormous height, while his barricade of bushes sheltered them fairly well from the wind.

"Now den, Beast," he exclaimed, approaching his sullen prisoner. "We'm got to consider your comfort a little. De question is, how will you sleep? How do you tink he had better sleep, Jack?"

"With his eyes shut, I should say."

"I mean what's de safest way for him to sleep. I don't want de man to excape, and dat's what he will try to do de moment he gets de chance, so I ain't gibing him de chance. I shall hab to tie your hands behind your back, my poor old hoss. You see, if I wasn't to do dat you might excape while I was sleeping, 'cos you can't rely on Jack and Sammy to keep watch. Dose men are always falling asleep when

dey ought to be awake. Hab you any objection to your hands being tied behind your back?"

"I will make you smart for the indignities you have placed upon me, and so I tell you, you impertinent scoundrel of a nigger! Do you understand that I am a gentleman in a good position?"

"Well, I'm going to put you in a better position still—at least, a safer position, dough I don't know weder it will be quite as comfortable. Now den, I'm sorry you are going to object, 'cos it won't do you any good, and it only gibs nre more trouble. Just catch hold ob his leading-cord, Jim, and as he struggles you jerk his leg upwards, and dis will help me wid his hands. You see, if I leabe his hands free he would easily be able to unfasten de cord round his ankle, and den we should hab him prowling away into de forest like some oder wild beast. Dat's better. Soon fix dis little lot up."

Pete was not long securing his prisoner; then he gazed at him with satisfaction, and lighted his pipe.

"Go to sleep, old hoss," said Pete.

"You utter villain! How can I go to sleep tied up like this?" roared Jakes.

"I dunno. You had better ask Jack or Sammy. Dey know most tings. You can't expect an ordinary nigger to be able to tell you eberyting in dis life. I only order you to go to sleep, and if you don't obey me I shall hab to beat you like de fond moders beat deir children when dey won't go to sleep. Funny way ob sending a child to sleep, but I suppose it is de right one. Must be on de counter-irritant cistern, de same as dey beat dem to stop dem crying when dey tumble down and hurt demselves. Golly! De wolves are starting yowling now."

As Pete spoke a dismal howl echoed through the forest, and it caused Jakes to struggle into a sitting posture, for he knew the peril of those forests in the winter-time, and there could be little doubt, by the sound of the howling, that wolves were approaching the camp-fire.

"They have probably scented this deer," said Jack.

"However, I dare say the fire will keep them at bay."

"Idiot, it will do no such thing!" cried Jakes. "I have lived in this forest for years, and naturally know its perils better than you do!"

"Dere ain't any perils!" declared Pete, who was getting warm and sleepy after his heavy meal.

"You stupid black beast, I tell you there are!"

"Dat's so; but it doesn't follow dat I hab got to believe a man like you. I'm mighty simple one way and anoder."

"That is perfectly true," observed Sam.

"You shut up, Sammy, and don't be so frightfully impersonal."

"I was only saying that you spoke the truth when you said that you were rather an idiot."

"Golly! I neber said any such ting. I said I might be rader simple, but I'm not simple enough to believe de Beast; and when he says dere's danger, and I say dere ain't none, it stands to reason dat I must be right and he must be wrong, 'cos, as Julius Cæsar tells us, tings which ain't equal to each oder can't possibly be equal to de same ting, and when you come to consider—groo—"

"The reckless villain is going to sleep!" groaned Jakes, who was evidently in terror of the wolves.

"Well, dat's a nice disaccusation to make against a wakeful nigger!" growled Pete, whose eyes were half closed—they were quite closed before Jakes spoke. "Go to sleep, Beast. You'm more trouble dan a crying child!"

"If you have any regard for your lives you will wake that blockhead up, and take precautions against an attack," said Jakes. "I have been attacked by wolves on more than one occasion, and now I tell you that you are in deadly peril. Mind, I have had great experience with the fierce brutes, and at this time of the year, when it is hard for them to get food, they will attack men without the slightest hesitation."

"Go to sleep, Jakes, and don't kick up such a frightful row!" growled Pete. "I'd rader listen to de yowling ob de poor, harmless wolves dan your noise."

"I believe the ruffian is a dangerous maniac!" groaned Jakes; "but you two men must have some common-sense!"

"Well, I hope so," answered Jack, enjoying his pipe. "All the same, I don't really see what you want us to do."

"Our only chance of life is to climb this tree, and pass the night in its branches. Perhaps when day breaks the wolves will draw off."

"Bother it, I'm not going to pass the night in this bitter cold in the branches of a tree, and I'm perfectly certain Pete would never do such a silly thing!"

"Then let the black beast be torn to pieces! What does it matter? I tell you plainly that if we do not ascend the tree we shall meet our deaths."

"Hold your row, Beast!" growled Pete. "I'm decomposing poetry, and I can't possibly fix up de sing-song ob it while you are making dis mighty row. Dis beautiful poem

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TWO

**GRAND LONG,
COMPLETE STORIES.**

concerns you, so you had best keep quiet. What comes in rhyme wid frying-pan, Jack?"

"Sister Ann!"

"But dere ain't no Sister Ann in it."

"Then leave frying-pan out and shove in saucepan."

"You shut up! I ain't spoiling my beautiful poem for de sake ob rhyme. Now, listen to dis little lot. It will 'bout make you weep:

"De night winds blow, fast falls de snow;
In de shadowy night de camp-fire's light
Glows weirdly and cold and dim.
And far from home de fierce wolves roam,
Wid angry growl and savage howl,
Revealing deir fangs so grim,
Suddenly, wid horrid glee, howls de wolf all merrily:
Now, at least, I'll hab a feast,
And drink de blood ob de sleeping Beast."

"What do you tink ob dat little lot, Jack?"

"Well, I should call it doggerel."

"Sounds to me more like wolfrel. All de same, you may be right, Jack. Whateber we call dat poem you can't take its beauties away."

"I reckon you are right there," said Sam. "It would puzzle you to find the beauties, to start with, and I'm mighty certain if anyone found them, they would never want to take them away."

"It's all right, Sam," laughed Jack, "he's asleep again. I don't think he heard your criticism."

"But what a stunning fellow he is!" exclaimed Jim. "He's always merry, and I don't believe he's frightened of anything. I had an idea that all men were like the Beast, but you fellows have shown me the difference."

"You will have cause to wish you had never met them!" snarled Jakes.

"No; that I never shall! If I fall into your power again and you kill me, I shall still be glad that I met them, you low-down, grovelling Beast! But Pete will give you what you deserve before he has done with you, and, however roughly he treats you, it will never be more than you deserve. Good-night, Jack and Sam! I'm going to try to get to sleep. You need not keep watch, because the slightest sound is bound to wake me."

Jack and Sam knew that this was the fact; all the same, they decided to keep watch, because from time to time they caught sight of the wolves prowling about beyond the light of the camp-fire. As for Pete, he slept as calmly as though he had been in a feather bed.

Jack took the first watch, while from time to time Jakes, who was too terrified to sleep, kept complaining of the peril they were in, even trying to induce Jack to set him at liberty and allow him to ascend the tree; but this Jack firmly refused to do. About a couple of hours passed by, and then the howling of the famished wolves grew so loud that it awoke Sam.

"I reckon the brutes are going to attack us," said Sam.

"I told you that they would do so from the start," said Jakes, pushing against Pete to awake him. "Wake up, you silly black scoundrel! The wolves are upon us!"

"Dere ain't any ob dem on me!" growled Pete, turning over, to get a little warmth at his back. The comrades were between the barricade of bushes and the fire, but the night was so piercingly cold that, notwithstanding the enormous size of the fire, it was difficult to keep warm all over.

"I tell you they are coming to attack us."

"Well, it ain't my fault. I didn't tell dem to come. Drive dem off."

"How can I drive them off, you utter idiot?"

"Show dem your face, and if dat don't frighten dem away you had better recite my poem at dem. If dat don't make dem rush away yowling, I dunno what will, unless I decompose anoder one."

"No; don't do that!" gasped Sam. "I would rather have the wolves!"

"Ain't it disgusting dat a poet neber gets appreciated in dis hard, cold world? I tink I shall take to— Groo—ah—groo!"

"Why, the mad villain has gone to sleep again!" gasped Jakes.

"Yes. He is not so timid as you are," laughed Jack, rising to his feet and holding his rifle in readiness, an example followed by Sam, for it was very evident that the famished pack were about to make an attack.

It was the rattle of the comrades' rifles that effectually awoke Pete, and, having emptied his rifle into the midst of the pack, he sprang at them with his axe, dealing terrific blows on every side.

"You had better let de prisoner loose, Jim, in case ob accidents," shouted Pete. "We sha'n't be long driving dis little lot off; still, if dey were to chaw us up, de Beast would be in rader an awkward position, and would stand a mighty good chance ob being chawed up himself."

For a few moments the pack of wolves drew off, then on

they came again, and now it seemed as though nothing would stop them. But the comrades fought side by side, Jack and Sam using their rifle-butts, while Pete used his formidable axe, a blow from which meant death to the recipient. Again there was a lull in the fierce combat, and now Pete rushed into the thickest of the fray, shouting at the top of his voice, and that furious charge caused the whole pack to turn and flee into the forest, howling as they went.

"Dere ain't de slightest chance ob dem coming back to-night," declared Pete. "Oh, I see you hab not undone de Beast, Jim!"

"No. I thought I would wait till I saw there was real danger," answered Jim. "He's as timid as ever he can stick. Look, he is all of a tremble, and there isn't much danger in wolves, either—if you only beat them off!"

"As dere ain't going to be anoder attack, boys, I tink de best ting we can do is to go to sleep again. We shall hab to get de Beast up early so as to continue our journey, and de sooner dat man is asleep de better it will be for his constitution."

Pete was the first to fall asleep. The fact that they might be attacked again at any moment was not sufficient to keep him awake, and in a very few minutes he was snoring in a manner that Jim said ought to frighten off the hungriest wolf that ever lived.

CHAPTER 5.

The Arrival at the Settlement—Pete Meets With a Cool Reception, and a Warm One—The Accusation—Confronting the Beast—Retribution.

THERE was no further attack that night, although at times the howling came very close to the camp-fire. The comrades had a very early breakfast the following morning, and immediately it was finished they continued their journey, Pete following the narrow stream the whole way, and bringing his whip to bear on Jakes when he wanted to take some other direction. All the time the wolves followed, as they could tell by their howls, but although the comrades sometimes caught sight of their gaunt bodies amongst the trees and bushes, no further attack was made.

For three days the journey continued, and towards the close of the fourth they came in sight of a town of considerable dimensions. Pete stopped at the first inn they came to, and the landlord was not a little surprised to see the way Jakes was being led; but as Pete made money matters all right with the landlord, there was no difficulty in still keeping him a prisoner.

"I tink, Sammy, I will get you to mind de Beast till I come back," said Pete, when they had made a very substantial meal. "Jim will help you wid de task, and Jack can come along wid me, 'cos I'm rader bashful."

"Where are you going?" demanded Jakes.

"Just going to see some ob de sights ob dis town, old hoss. Don't you boder yourself about our business. You will mighty soon know all dat we are going to do, and I'm inclined to tink it will be sooner dan you care for. Dis way to London, Jack!"

Then Pete explained what had happened to Jakes, and how he had found out so much concerning Jim.

"You see, Zadie has giben me de address ob de old man, so we sha'n't hab de slightest difficulty in finding him out. De only question is weder he will be able to identify his son; but I hab got dis locket, which de sayages found round de boy's neck, and p'r'aps dat will help matters."

James Harvey's house was on the outskirts of the town. It was a very large building, and, judging by the surroundings, there was no dearth of money there; in fact, the whole place was kept up in grand style.

A manservant opened the door, and he informed them that his master was at dinner, and would be unable to see them for an hour.

"Well, see here, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete. "You just go to dat man and tell him dat a nigger named Pete wants to see him at once, and he will hab to finish his dinner some oder time."

The footman entered one of the rooms, and evidently delivered the message, for they heard an angry voice from inside:

"Tell the insolent rascal that I will not see him at all! How dare he send a message like that to me?"

"Come 'long, Jack. De poor old hoss don't know what we hab come about, and don't like habing his dinner disturbed. Dis way to London!"

Pete walked boldly into a very handsomely furnished room, where an elderly gentleman was seated alone. He was a tall, handsome man, with a military appearance, and he strode up to Pete as though he was quite ready to make use of his strength.

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"Sit down, old hoss, and don't excite yourself. You may go on wid your dinner while I talk, but I ain't going to keep you such a mighty long time."

"What is the meaning of this impertinence?" demanded Mr. Harvey, turning to Jack.

"It is not impertinence, Mr. Harvey. My friend Pete's manner may be a little familiar, but a better-hearted man never lived. He has come here with a view to doing good, and if you will only listen to him, I feel sure you will pardon the intrusion."

"Well, I suppose he has come to ask me to assist in some charity, and although I shall not refuse, I must say that I think you should have waited till I have finished dinner."

"Dere ain't no charity in de question, my dear old hoss," said Pete. "I hab come here for your good. I tink you know a man named Jakes?"

"My cousin! Yes!"

"Suppose you were to die, who would your money go to?"

"Really, I do not see how this concerns you."

"I trust you will answer his questions, Mr. Harvey," said Jack. "Indeed, it is to your interest to do so."

"Well, my first cousin, the only relative I have, would inherit it; at least, the bulk of it. My fortune is derived from a gold-mine, and it was left entailed."

"You couldn't leave it to anyone else?" inquired Pete.

"No. It is only mine for life, then it passes to my nearest heir. It was so willed by my father, because he did not wish the property to be divided. He discovered the mine, and had the right to leave it as he liked. I was his only son."

"Den your own son would hab inherited it?"

"Had he lived. Yes. I have no son now."

"You hab no wife?"

"My wife was taken from me soon after my son was born—fifteen years ago."

"Old hoss," exclaimed Pete, placing his brawny hand on Mr. Harvey's shoulder, "I'm sorry for you—I'm mighty sorry for you!"

"Thank you. Now, what is your name?"

"Pete!"

"Well, Pete, I think you are sorry for me, as you say, and I think I was mistaken in you. No doubt you have heard that I do any little good I can, and have come to ask help. Tell me exactly what you want, and probably I shall do it."

"I don't want anyting. I only wanted dat information to learn why de Beast robbed you ob your son."

"Who?"

"Jakes! We call him de Beast, and it ain't at all a bad name for him. You see, dat man knew dat if he got your son out ob de way, and you didn't marry again, he would inherit your fortune, which I 'spect is large."

"It is very large; but what you say is impossible. You must be making some great mistake. Did I think that—but it is impossible."

"I tell you it's exactly what occurred."

"My little son was stolen by an Indian squaw, and— It was an act of vengeance. You will know the rest. Proofs of his death were sent to me, and the miscreants who committed the vile deed were never brought to justice. It has wrecked my life. Well, many years have passed since then, and time must lessen all our griefs."

"You see, old hoss, it ain't likely dat we are coming here in dis manner unless we can prove dat Jakes is guilty. P'r'aps you will leave me to do it in my own way. I dunno dat I hab actual proof dat will convict him, but dere will be enough proof to convince you. Now, finish your dinner."

"I need no more. I can eat no more. Tell me all you know."

"Jakes suggested de mode ob revenge to de savage chief. I saved his daughter's life, or helped to save it, and she told me all about it."

"It was not for them to seek vengeance. They attacked us. I was badly wounded, and we only fought in self-defence."

"Well, she told me dat Jakes incited de chief to steal your son, and also to kill him. Dis is a locket dat was taken from de child's neck."

"Yes!" exclaimed Harvey, opening it with trembling hands. "I placed it there. It has his mother's portrait in it."

"Steady, old hoss! Just show us how you can keep calm. Your son ain't dead. Now, look here. I told you to keep steady."

"Have you come here to torture me? You say—"

"I say your son ain't dead. He is as well as you are, and we hab got him."

"It cannot be. I dare not believe you—I mean, you may be mistaken. Have you seen him?"

"Rader! A mighty fine lad he is, too."

"Come this way. His portrait was painted when he was very young. You may be able to recognise the likeness; but it cannot be. I don't deserve such happiness."

"I dunno 'bout dat. Seems to me you hab had a mighty

lot ob trouble, one way and— Golly! Dat's de boy! Just de same expression in his eyes."

"There is no doubt!" cried Jack. "He also bears a resemblance to you, Mr. Harvey, except that his eyes are grey."

"They were. Like his mother. Is he far away?"

"If you come along wid us, old hoss, you can see him in half an hour from now; and you can see de Beast as well."

Harvey obeyed like a man in a dream, and then they made their way to the little inn, and suddenly entered the room. Not for one moment was there a doubt in the father's mind. One glance at the lad was sufficient to convince him that his son, whose death he had never doubted all these years, stood before him; and the meeting so affected Pete that he seized Jakes by the collar and shook him till his teeth rattled, just to conceal his own emotion, for Harvey quite broke down, and there were tears in Jim's eyes.

"Now, old hoss, ain't you got anyting to say to de Beast?"

"Only that he is not safe in my presence!"

"Well, he won't be much safer when I tell you dat he has treated Jim in de most brutal manner, and I am glad to say de lad has made tings pretty warm for him at de same time."

"Listen to me, James," exclaimed Jakes. "I—"

"Be careful what you say. You shall be punished for your vile deed. Nothing will ever alter that decision. I have befriended you. I have given you la ge sums of money, and would have given you more, and all the while you were keeping me in misery, and would have robbed my son."

"You are taking things for granted. Suppose I tell you that this lad is not your son?"

"It would but be adding one lie to your lying life. I would rather take Pete's lightest word to your oath. I have always known you to be untruthful, but I did not think that you were a dastardly villain."

"Suppose I give you my aid in this matter, and—"

"Your aid! Do you think I would take it? I want no aid. I know my son; that is sufficient for me. Here, landlord, send for the police!"

"Can I speak to you in private?" pleaded Jakes.

"No, you dastard! You would not be safe in my presence alone, notwithstanding my age. Gentlemen, I think I should strangle him. Why such an utter villain did not make his crime complete with murder is a mystery to me."

"Dat's easily explained, old hoss," said Pete. "He wanted de chief to take de little boy's life, and he would hab done it, too, if it had not been for his daughter Zadie. She pleaded for your boy's life, and got it spared; den de lad lived in de hut wid Jakes, and dat man did not dare to murder him, because de chief had sworn if Jim died, Jakes should meet de same fate. Dat girl says she will come here and prove all dis, if you pledge your word dat she shall not be punished."

"Punished! I will make her rich. Ah! Here are the police. I give this man in custody for abducting my son and inciting the savages to murder him. Take him to the station. I will come and charge him."

"At least, you will let me speak to you in private, James?" pleaded Jakes. "Remember, I am your kinsman, and to disgrace me—"

"Take him away. Come, my friends. You will stay at my house, and if there is anything in this world that I can do for you, you have only to name it."

But there was nothing. Jack, Sam, and Pete felt that they had done their duty, and this was all they needed.

That night Jakes was placed in custody, and the comrades spent some very pleasant days with Mr. Harvey.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday's MARVEL will contain "Fort Tempest," another fine tale of the Famous Comrades, by S. Clarke Hook.

AN EXTRA LONG,
COMPLETE TALE OF
JACK, SAM, and
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IS COMING!

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THE CAPTAIN OF THE SCHOOL

A Splendid
Tale of
School Life.



By
the Author of
"Winning
His Way,"
etc.

CHAPTER I.

The Captain of the School.

BOOM! The heavy report of the gun floated through the crisp air to the ears of a group of schoolboys who were standing and talking by the big bronze gates of Headland College.

The echo of the sinister sound rolled in from the sea, and died away into silence. And silence had fallen upon the group of lads who had been carelessly chatting a few moments before. They knew what the gunshot from the distant building upon the hill meant.

A convict had escaped from Headland Prison, and the gun was fired to give warning to the countryside.

"A gun from the prison!" said Frank Meredith, captain of Headland School. He looked away across the dark woods in the direction of the prison, the tower of which could be seen over the trees in the distance. "Some poor beggar made a bolt for it."

"I don't know about poor beggar," said Kendal, of the Sixth. "Some hulking ruffian more likely; and he'll be hanging about the woods until they run him down."

"Well, they're bound to do that before long," remarked Meredith. "There have been escapes from Headland Prison before, but I don't think anybody ever got clean away. There was a chap escaped when I was a youngster in the Fourth here, and he was recaptured, starved almost to death, after four days in the woods. I saw him as he was being taken back to the prison by the warders, and I couldn't help feeling sorry for him."

Kendal yawned slightly.

"Your tender heart does you credit," he said, with the suggestion of a sneer. "I don't suppose the man deserved much sympathy. It's all very well to feel sorry for him, but if he met you in a dark corner some night, you'd feel sorry for yourself."

The remark raised a laugh, and Frank Meredith flushed slightly.

There had always been some friction between him and Kendal, who was a prefect, and had had aspirations to the captaincy of Headland before Frank was elected to that post. In point of fact, Gerald Kendal had not yet given up hope of realising his secret ambition.

"Well, I'm off," said Meredith, turning away. "I've no time to waste, to be back before the football match. Any of you fellows feel inclined to come and explore the caves with me?"

"Too much like work," yawned Kendal. "Besides, now I come to think of it, those caves are just the place for the escaped convict to scuttle into. You may meet him there, and tell him how sorry you are for him."

Meredith made no reply.

He strode up the lane which led round the headland to the shore, and the rest of the group dispersed to follow their various ways.

It was a half-holiday at Headland School, and the captain, who had long intended to explore the sea-caves under the

headland, had fixed this afternoon for his excursion. He soon left the lane for the rough, shingly path, and came in sight of the sea, rolling vast and grey in the wintry sunshine, with here and there a white sail or the black trail of a steamer's smoke upon it.

The fishing village was now to his right, with the prison on the hill beyond, and to his left the headland from which the school took its name, with its deep, dark caves, in which, so legend said, smugglers had stored their contraband goods in the old days.

Dark and gloomy looked the deep caverns as Frank Meredith stood at the opening in the big, grey cliff. The thought came into his mind that Kendal's suggestion might be near the truth; that the fugitive from the prison on the hill might very probably have taken refuge from his hunters in the recesses of the sea-caves. But the thought of possible danger did not deter him.

The captain of Headland, the finest athlete in the college, knew how to take care of himself, and he was not afraid of a meeting with the escaped convict if it should come to pass.

There were other dangers in the caves, he knew, dangers more real—deep crevices, which were flowing streams when the tide was in and yawning chasms when it was out. Half the sea-caves were partially submerged when the tide was at the flood.

Frank halted to light the bicycle lamp he had brought with him, and then advanced boldly into the cave. It seemed to extend to unknown depths into the cliff, and soon he passed a bend which completely shut him out from the daylight.

The lantern gleamed eerily upon dark walls of rock, clinging masses of seaweed, and upon the glistening wet sand at his feet.

Suddenly he gave a start. In the wet sand before him he saw a footprint, evidently freshly made. He bent down and scrutinised it closely. Someone had lately been in the cave, and again Frank Meredith thought of the convict.

He could not help giving a quick glance round into the dim shadows. But nothing met his gaze save the cold rock, and the next moment he smiled at his own nervousness. Flashing the lantern before him, he advanced deeper into the dim recesses of the cave.

Clink!

It was the sound of a boot upon a stone, but it had not been made by himself. And it was between him and the sea. Whoever had made that sound was behind him. A vision of a burly ruffian creeping upon him in the darkness flashed into Meredith's mind, and he swung hastily round. His foot slipped upon a mass of wet seaweed, and he stumbled. The lantern crashed against a rock, and the next moment he was in darkness.

Blackness, blacker than night, settled round Frank Meredith as the lantern was extinguished. The lantern had slipped from his hand in the concussion. He got upon his hands and knees and felt in his pocket for his matches. They were not to be found. Had the box dropped from his pocket in his fall? Or had he lost them previously? He set his lips, and began to grope in the darkness over the rocky floor, moving on hands and knees, and a sudden, horrified shriek rang from

his lips as he felt himself falling. He had blundered over the edge of a crevice in the dark.

That one wild shriek he gave, and then the rush through the air stifled his utterance. There was a splash as he struck into icy water, and then he was struggling for his life in the blackness.

He was, fortunately, a good swimmer. He easily kept himself afloat, and felt round him in the gloom for the side of the crevice. His hand came in contact with the hard rock. The surface of it was rough, and he caught at a jut of it to hold on, but he was soon assured that it was impossible to climb. He made two attempts, and each time slipped back before he was quite out of the water.

The chill was now getting into his limbs, and his fingers were numbed; he would not be able to swim, or to hold on to the rock much longer.

Was it death, then?

He thought of the man in the cave. He was certain that someone was there; and even if it were the convict, surely he could not be wicked enough to leave a fellow-creature to die! Then came the chilling reflection that, if it were the convict, he would not run the risk of making his whereabouts known by saving the luckless explorer of the caves.

Still, there was a chance; one chance of life, and no other. And Frank shouted for help till the cavern rang again.

"Help, help!"

The echoes rolled back his voice like thunder—"Help, help!"

To his joy, he heard an answering shout from the gloom above.

"Where are you?"

It was a man's voice, and Frank could have cried out with joy.

"Thank Heaven! Can you help me? Will you help me? I'm at the bottom of a crevice, but for goodness' sake don't tumble in too! It's slippery on the edge," called out Meredith anxiously.

"I am taking care," came the reply. "Are you holding on?"

"Yes. But I'm chilled to the bone," said Frank, through his chattering teeth. "There's a lantern near where I fell, and, I think, a box of matches."

"Hold on while I look for them!"

There was a sound of groping in the darkness. Minute followed minute. The chill of the water was terrible. Then the welcome sound of a scratching match.

"I've found the match-box! Hold on!"

There was a glimmer of light.

A few moments more and a man, kneeling on the verge of the crevice, swung the lantern over the opening and cast its light downward.

Six feet below was the surface of the water, with the white face looking up from it; but it might have been sixty feet for all the chance Frank Meredith had of getting out unaided. For the side of the crevice was as perpendicular as the side of a house, and a cat could not have climbed it.

"Have you a rope?" gasped Frank. "Can you get one? You cannot reach me."

"I have no rope."

There was a brief, tense pause. They looked at each other in the lantern light, and Frank caught a glimpse of the man's clothes in the rays, and saw the mark of the broad arrow upon them. It was the convict!

He gave a groan.

"I will save you," said the man, in a low, steady voice.

"You cannot."

"I can, and will!"

He set the lantern on the rock so that it shone over the crevice. Then he felt along the rough, rocky edge with his hands.

"Listen," he said. "There is one chance. I cannot reach you, and I have no rope. I will lower myself down, and hold on by my hands. You will take hold of me and climb over me."

Frank gasped.

"I shall drag you down to death! No, no, better one than two—"

"You will do as I say," interrupted the man coolly. "My life is of little value if I lose it. But I think I can hold on—I am sure of it."

"God bless you!"

"Look out, then!"

The man's hands fastened upon a projection on the edge of the crevice, and he lowered himself into the gulf. His feet swung over the water, almost touching the surface.

"I am ready," he said quietly.

Frank Meredith released his hold upon the rock. He took a grip upon the man's ankles, and then, catching at his clothing, began to climb.

At any other time such a climb would have been nothing to him. But now he was numbed and shivering. Still, he climbed steadily. His grip changed to the man's waist, then to his shoulders. He heard a grunt from the man under his weight; he was standing the test nobly. Frank's hand touched

the top of the crevice, he gripped the rock, and drew himself out upon the floor of the cavern.

"Help me up!" said his rescuer faintly.

Frank's strong grip closed upon him, and he was drawn up from the dangerous position. Frank shook the water from his clothes.

"Thank you," he said quietly. "You have saved my life!" He held out his hand.

The man did not stir, but a bitter smile came upon his face.

"Do you know what I am?" he asked. "You must see the brand of the broad arrow upon my clothing—you must have heard the gun from the prison."

"You are an escaped convict?"

"Yes."

"But you are a brave man, and you have risked your life to save mine. Give me your hand!"

The man gripped his hand hard.

"Then you will not betray me?"

"You must think me an ungrateful brute to ask that question," he said.

"No, no! But I am an Ishmael—every man's hand is against me. The gun from Headland Prison has sounded the alarm that a wild beast is let loose upon society!"

And the convict laughed savagely.

"I shall not betray you," said Frank quietly. "If you had let me drown in that hole, the police could have learned nothing from me; they shall learn nothing now."

"Thank you! And if you care to know it—that you may feel more at ease for granting me so much—I am innocent, as innocent of the crime laid to my charge as a babe unborn!" The man's voice was passionate and eager. "But what if I am!" he added bitterly. "Why should you believe me—an escaped convict?"

"But I do believe you," said Frank. "A man so brave and generous cannot be a criminal—at least, I should hope not. I know that innocent men have suffered before now. I do believe you."

"God bless you for those words! Tell me, you belong to Headland College, do you not?"

"Yes, I'm captain of Headland," said Frank. He looked at the man closely. "Haven't I seen you before? I have some recollection of your features. Yes, by Jove! You are the man who escaped from Headland Prison before, and I saw the warders taking you back."

"I have escaped before, it is true, but I was taken. I will never be taken again! If escape is cut off, there is the sea!" said the convict, more to himself than to Frank.

The boy shuddered.

"Take care what you do," he said. "If you are innocent, as I believe, all may come right in the end."

The man laughed harshly.

"Yes, when a scoundrel who should be in my place confesses the truth—when a heart of stone is softened! But that will never be. I have escaped, and I will remain free, or die! But there's a chance! Boy"—he broke off abruptly—"I have saved your life. You say you believe that I am innocent. I tell you further—I am an old Headland boy. I have a son now at Headland College, though, thank heaven, he does not know his father's shame—and will never know it, unless my name is cleared in the eyes of the world! Will you help me, will you help me to keep out of that Inferno yonder on the hill?"

Frank looked at him in amazement.

"You were a Headland fellow!" he exclaimed. "You have a son there!"

"I swear it is the truth."

"I believe you—I will help you. What can I do?"

"But—no, no, the risk is too great! You will be breaking the law, and if your schoolmaster should discover—"

"You did not think of the risk when you saved my life; I shall not think of it now. What can I do to help you?" said Frank firmly.

"You mean it? Heaven bless you! It means life or death to me! Bring me food and a change of clothing, so that I can make a bid for liberty—that is all I ask. Can you—will you do it?"

"I can, and I will."

"God bless you!"

"I will leave you the lantern and matches. I will come to-night if I possibly can; if not, some time to-morrow—and bring you food," said Frank. "You may rely upon me. But stay! The warders may search the caves, so you had better keep close. We must arrange a signal so that you will know it is I."

"Whistle something, and I will listen for it."

"Good!" Frank whistled a few bars from the Toreador song in "Carmen"—the first that came into his head. "When you hear that you will know who it is. And now I shall have to bolt, or I shall catch a fearful cold."

Another grip of the hand, and they parted. And Frank, quitting the sea-caves which had been the scene of so strange an adventure, started at a swinging run for Headland School.

CHAPTER 2.

An Interrupted Football Match.

"HALLO!"

"Where on earth have you been?"

"Taking a swim with your clothes on?"

"What's the giddy game, anyway?"

Such were the exclamations that greeted Frank Meredith as he ran into a group of Headland fellows in the lane near the school.

"I had a tumble in the caves," he explained breathlessly. "I must cut on and get into some dry things."

"Met the convict?" asked Gerald Kendal with a laugh.

It was an awkward question, and Frank coloured slightly as he avoided giving a direct answer.

"I must buzz off," he said. "So long!" And he ran lightly on up the lane.

The fellows stared after him, discussing the matter. There was a peculiar expression upon Gerald Kendal's face.

"He didn't say whether he had met the convict," he remarked. "He hasn't brought his lantern away, either."

"I suppose he lost it when he tumbled into the water," remarked Manners. "I say, he was jolly lucky not to be drowned; there are some beastly deep holes up in the sea-caves! I haven't been there myself, but the fishermen say so."

"He'll be late for the match," said Kendal. "If he is, we shall have to play without him, that's all."

From Kendal's expression it could be seen that he would not have been disappointed if Frank Meredith had failed to reach the football ground in time for the match.

"Oh, hang it!" said Manners. "We couldn't play without Meredith! What are you talking about, Kendal?"

"Rats!" said Kendal.

But Frank turned up in time for the match. It had not taken him long to give himself a rub down and to change into his football things, and he was on the field in good time.

The match was between the Headland first eleven and a scratch team captained by Mr. Darke, the master of the Sixth.

Darke was a tall, well-built man, with a somewhat narrow and not very cordial face. He was a good athlete, and respected at Headland, but few were found to like him for his personal qualities. There was no love lost between him and the captain of the school, though they always met with an unvarying show of politeness. But there was something secretive, something not quite open and candid about Mr. Darke which Frank felt instinctively and disliked, opposed as it was to his own hearty, cordial nature.

"I think we shall beat you this time, Meredith," said Mr. Darke with a smile, as the two captains met to toss the coin.

Frank smiled.

"I hope not, sir; we shall do our best."

"Heads!" said Mr. Darke. "Ah, heads it is! You will kick off, Meredith."

Meredith glanced over his men. He was at centre forward himself, with Gerald Kendal at his left and Manners on his right. The Headland first team was a good deal better than the scratch team, but Mr. Darke was a fine player and had all the advantage of a grown man over lads.

The whistle went, and the ball rolled from Meredith's foot.

Headland's first team were soon swarming over their opponents' territory, and Frank Meredith led a gallant attack upon the goal. The ball went in from the captain's foot, and the goalkeeper failed to save, and ringing cheers round the field announced the first success to Meredith.

Mr. Darke's eyes glittered as the goalie threw out the ball. This rapid success of the first eleven was galling to him, for he had started the play with the intention of lowering the colours of the Headland captain.

The teams lined up again, and Darke threw himself into the game with ardour.

A rush of the first eleven was baffled, and Darke got away with the ball, his forwards backing him up in fine style. Passing well one to another, Darke's men came up the field, till Frank, with a fine run and a skilful bit of play, deprived them of the ball, and rushed it away towards the half-way line.

There was a cheer.

But the master of the Sixth was after him like a shot. Like a flash he had the ball away from Meredith, and, dodging a couple of the first, he dribbled the leather away goalward in fine style.

"Well played, sir!" rose an admiring shout.

Darke was dribbling splendidly, and the first team goalie was watching with all his eyes. It was between him and Darke now.

Then, all of a sudden, as he was about to kick what looked like an almost certain goal, Darke hesitated and fumbled with the ball. "What was the matter with him?"

"Kick! Kick!" rose a general yell.

But Darke did not kick. He was standing quite still, staring across the field; and many eyes followed the direction of his gaze.

Two men in uniform were coming towards the football field, and, at a glance, they were known as warders from Headland Prison.

Darke's preoccupation was fatal to his chance. The ball was taken away from his toe and rushed off to the other end of the field, and a minute later it was soaring into the goal amid a burst of cheering.

Darke's followers looked at him in amazement, not unmixed with rage.

The master of the Sixth paid them no heed. He spoke in a low voice to the referee for a moment, and then walked off the field and met the two men in uniform.

"What do you want here?" he asked. "Has there been an escape from the prison?"

"Yes, sir," replied one of them. "Didn't you hear the gun a couple of hours ago?"

"No; I was away."

"We are looking for him, sir, and the others are scouring the country in all directions. We thought perhaps some of the boys might have seen something of him, as it's a holiday at the college, sir, and he's hanging about somewhere."

"You may question them," said Mr. Darke. "It is our duty to render you any assistance in our power. By the way, who is the man who has escaped—a desperate character?"

"Well—no, not exactly, sir. I don't know that he'd do anyone any harm," said the warder. "But he's given us a lot of trouble. This is the second time he's got away."

Mr. Darke changed colour slightly.

"Ah—the same man, Convict twenty-seven?" he asked.

"The same, sir. You heard about that, then?"

"Yes," said Mr. Darke, "I heard about it. Well, I wish you every success."

He returned to the football field.

During this colloquy the game had been stopped. The players had awaited the end of it with a good deal of impatience. Anybody but Mr. Darke would have been sharply called to order for acting in such a manner, but the master of the Sixth had the privilege of doing as he liked. He rejoined his team, and the whistle went. Play was resumed, and the two teams were soon hard at it again.

The warders, taking advantage of Mr. Darke's permission, asked questions of a good many of the boys about the ground. Of the players, of course, they could ask nothing, and so Frank Meredith escaped the ordeal of questioning.

The two men in uniform presently disappeared long before the game ended. Frank Meredith, who of course guessed their business, was glad to see them go.

The keenness Mr. Darke had shown in the early part of the game was gone now. He was absent-minded, and missed chances, and more than once both followers and opponents stared at him, wondering what had come over the master of the Sixth since his interview with the two warders from Headland Prison.

The match ended with Headland First four goals to two, but the defeated eleven felt that their failure was due to their captain's lack of interest in the game, and looks the reverse of amiable were cast at him as the teams strolled off.

Mr. Darke was unheeding of all. He left the ground quickly, and having changed his clothes he quitted the school, and he did not return until a late hour that night. Where he had been he told no one.

CHAPTER 3.

A Night Expedition.

ELEVEN struck from the school clock. As the last stroke died away, Frank Meredith opened his study door.

The corridor was dark and silent. Headland College was asleep, save, perhaps, that one or two of the masters were burning the midnight oil.

Frank's face was very grave, but quietly resolute. He knew that he was about to break the rules of the school by quitting Headland, but his promise was to be kept, and he regarded his intended help to the unhappy fugitive in the light of a sacred duty.

The man who had risked his life and liberty for another was no common criminal, and Frank fully believed the convict's declaration that he was an innocent man. He believed him, too, when he said that he was an old Headland boy, and had a son at the school. For many reasons he was determined to help the unhappy man who had escaped the iron grip of the law.

The captain of the school had made his preparations earlier in the evening. His fag had been given a couple of sovereigns and carte blanche for the collection of provisions, and he had done the work of caterer well. Frank's cricket-bag was stuffed to its utmost limits. There were other things in a package in his coat pocket, such as a can of oil for the bicycle lamp, matches, candles, and a towel.

To visit the caves in the daylight was risky, especially carrying a parcel. For the sake of the convict, it was necessary to go

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after dark, and the captain could only escape curious questions by going when the rest of the school had been wrapped in slumber. It was a serious infraction of the college rules, but the captain was satisfied that he was doing his duty, and so he went about it quietly and resolutely.

He had extinguished his light. He went quietly down the passage and descended into the hall. A door in the rear of the schoolhouse gave him egress into the Close, and the rest was easy.

He crossed rapidly towards the gates and suddenly stopped, his heart beating at the sound of a footstep. In a moment he had stepped behind one of the big elms.

A man passed him, walking quickly towards the house. Frank caught a glimpse of him, and recognised Mr. Darke. The master of the Sixth was looking tired and depressed. He disappeared in a moment or two, and Frank, congratulating himself upon his narrow escape, went on to the gate.

It took him but a minute to climb it and drop down into the road outside. Then, with the bag under his arm, he set off rapidly towards the shingly path leading down to the caves.

Once or twice, as he went down the lane, he fancied he heard a footstep behind him. He stopped and looked back, but could see nothing in the dim shadows. He put it down to fancy, and strode on, and at last reached the cave.

Grim and gloomy looked the great headland in the blackness of night, with the sea, invisible in the darkness, rolling with a sullen murmur upon the rocks at its base.

Frank stumbled over the shingle, striking matches several times to assure himself that he was on the right path. At last he stood within the cave.

Standing there in the darkness, he began to whistle softly, and then more loudly.

"Hist!"

It was an eerie voice from the darkness. It made Frank start in spite of himself.

"You are there?" he said. "Where is the lantern?"

"Burnt out."

"I have brought you a can of oil for it, and some grub—enough to last you some days. I haven't been able to get any clothes yet."

"Never mind. Heavens, I am starving!"

Frank struck a vesta. The cave was very cold, and the convict was white and shivering. The boy's face was full of compassion.

"I wish I could get you some blankets or something," he said. "I was pretty well loaded this time, but I will come again. Anyway, I'll leave you my overcoat."

"No, no, it will be missed, and—"

"That will be all right."

Frank laid down his parcels, and took off his coat. It was quite big enough for the man, and he gave a grunt of relief as he felt its warm folds round him.

By the light of a vesta Frank refilled the lantern, and then lighted it. The convict opened the bag, and his famished eyes danced as he saw the store of good things within.

"You are very kind," he said, in a choking voice. "I had almost ceased to believe in human nature. God bless you!"

"You saved my life," said Frank.

The man ate ravenously, and yet with a certain decency which showed that, convict as he was, he had been accustomed to better things.

Frank waited while he ate. He wanted to get back to the school as soon as he could, but he knew how much human companionship must mean to the man who had been shut up in the cavern for so long alone, and so he determined to linger for a while.

"You must take care not to leave any traces," he remarked. "The warders are pretty certain to search the caves for you."

The convict nodded.

"I have found a recess in the rocks," he replied. "It is high up the side of the cave, some distance in, and I think I can hide there in security if the caves are searched. Shall I see you again?"

"Yes. It wouldn't do to come here in the daylight, but to-morrow night I'll try and pay you another visit," said Frank. "I'll bring you the clothes then, if I can. If you really have a safe hiding-place, though, it would be best for you to lie low here for a few days before you make a run for it."

"Yes, I was thinking of that. Have you seen anything of the warders?"

"Yes, two of them came along this afternoon while we were at football. They asked some of the fellows if they had seen you, but I was playing, so they couldn't question me."

"No one suspects that you have seen me?"

"No one, I think, unless—" Frank paused.

"Unless?" repeated the convict anxiously.

"There's one chap. He seemed to suspect that something had happened when I told of my tumble in the caves," replied Frank. "He remarked on my leaving the lantern here, and once or twice in the evening he's made references to the matter. But I don't see how he can really suspect anything of the

truth. Still, if he smelt a rat I would ask him to keep quiet, and I expect he would."

"You think you could trust him?"

"I believe so. Kendal's a decent fellow, only rather—"

"Who?"

"Kendal—Gerald Kendal. That's the fellow I was speaking of."

The convict bent and fumbled in the bag, and Frank could not see his face.

"Yes," said the man, after a long pause. "But you'll keep the secret from him if you can, won't you? You won't let him know anything about it if you can possibly help it?"

"Certainly not!"

"I should feel terrified if I thought anybody else knew," said the convict nervously. "Keep it from him."

"That's all right. I dare say he'll have forgotten about it by to-morrow."

"You had better return now," said the convict abruptly. "I must not keep you out. God bless you for what you have done."

"Good-night, then."

"Good-night, my boy."

Frank strode out of the cave.

The convict, lantern in hand, retired into the recesses of the black cavern. Frank turned up the shingly path, and after a few paces, ran right into a dusky form.

In a moment his grip had fastened upon it.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?"

"Hands off!" said a sullen voice. "Hands off, Frank Meredith!"

Frank released him in sheer astonishment, for it was the voice of Gerald Kendal.

There was a tense silence for some moments. Then Frank Meredith stretched out his hand again and caught Kendal by the arm.

"Come!" he said briefly.

Kendal sneered.

"Afraid your convict friend will hear us?" he asked.

"Come!" repeated Frank; and there was a tone in his voice which made Kendal think it was best to obey without further demur.

With the captain's hand still on his arm, Kendal walked by Frank's side till they had left the shingle path, and stood under the trees in the lane leading to the school. Then Frank Meredith stopped.

In the dim light of the stars they stood facing each other. Gerald Kendal was a little pale, but his face wore a smile of malicious satisfaction. Frank Meredith's brow was very stern.

"You followed me?" he said.

Kendal nodded.

"Why?"

"To find out what you were up to."

"And what was your motive for playing the spy?"

"Do you want to know?" asked Kendal with a sneer. "I'll tell you, then. You put up for captain of Headland and beat me at the poll. I don't complain of that—the fellows had a right to elect whomsoever they chose; but the captain of Headland is supposed to have the honour of the school at heart. A fellow who consorts with convicts has no right to hold such a post."

Frank's teeth set hard.

"I suspected something was up this afternoon," continued Kendal. "You gave yourself away. Then I found out that you were getting provisions together, and you borrowed a can of oil of Melville, though you had left your lantern in the cave."

Meredith smiled bitterly.

"You should be a detective," he said.

"At all events, I bowled you out," said Kendal. "It was pretty plain to me, and I made up my mind to watch you. I guessed what the grub was for, and that you'd try to get it to the cave after dark. When I saw you breaking bounds in the middle of the night, of course I knew where you were going. I followed."

"Like a rotten, cowardly spy!"

"Hard names break no bones," said Kendal. "Of course, if the man's a friend of yours, I suppose you can't be blamed for sticking to him. If he's your father or your uncle, or anything like that—"

"Hold your tongue!"

Kendal gave a chuckle.

"Certainly. But I suppose he's a relation of some kind, or you wouldn't be doing all this for him."

"He is nothing at all to me, but he saved my life when I fell into a pool in the cave this afternoon."

"Quite romantic! And, of course, he assured you that he was an innocent man, deeply wronged, and so forth," said Kendal with a sneer.

"He did, and I believed him."

"More fool you!" Kendal turned away to walk to the school.

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"Stop a minute, Kendal!"
 "Well, what is it?"
 "Are you going to betray that poor fellow?"
 "Certainly! He didn't save my life," said Kendal. "It's a chap's duty to have him caught if possible."
 "Will you keep silent as a favour to me?" asked Frank with an effort.
 "What have you ever done for me?"
 "Then you refuse?"
 Kendal seemed to reflect.
 "I'll think over it," he said finally. "There may be something to be said for your view of the case. Look here, I won't say anything until I've seen you again and talked it over. Will that satisfy you?"
 "I suppose it must."
 "And now," said Kendal, "we'd better be getting back to the school—unless you want to make a night of it."
 The walk back to the school was accomplished in silence. Frank was in no mood for talk, and Kendal, to judge by the expression of his face, was busy with his thoughts, and they were pleasant ones.
 They reached the school and entered without mishap, and went to their rooms; but it was long before Frank Meredith was able to sleep.

CHAPTER 4.

Kendal Makes Terms.

FRANK MEREDITH wore a worried look when he came down the next morning. He had missed some hours of sleep, which was not without its effect, and Kendal's knowledge of the convict's secret weighed upon his mind.
 What would Gerald Kendal do? Would he keep the secret when, by divulging it, he could spite the captain of Headland and appear in an extra special virtuous light? Frank knew how Kendal had long disliked him and how bitter he had been when Frank became captain of Headland School.
 No, it was not likely that Kendal would keep the secret. And it was impossible to convey a warning to the convict in the sea-cave; any attempt to do so, he knew, would make Kendal speak at once.
 The day passed very heavily to Frank. As if for the purpose of keeping him in suspense, Kendal avoided him during the day, though he sometimes gave him significant glances. It was not till after school that he came to the captain's study.
 He came in and closed the door.
 Frank looked at him inquiringly without speaking.
 "I am willing to come to terms," said Kendal, "if you are."
 "What terms do you mean?"
 "You must be aware, as well as I am, that it's not the proper thing for a captain of Headland to associate with convicts and to break bounds in the middle of the night."
 "Have you come here to preach to me?"
 "No," said Kendal, nettled, "I've come to talk business. I've thought over the matter, and I've come to a decision. If you care to resign the post of captain of Headland School, I'll keep your secret."
 Frank looked at him steadily, and Kendal's glance sank.
 "So that's it," said the captain slowly, "that's what you want!"
 "You must know it's your duty to resign, considering—"
 "We needn't discuss that. You have fixed that as the price of your silence?"
 "If you like to put it like that—yes. After all, if I chose to acquaint Dr. Lane with your dealings with escaped convicts you would jolly soon have to resign, and you know it—if you were not expelled from Headland."
 "I am in your power," Frank said; "I have given my word to the man in the cave, and I cannot break it. I agree to your terms. I won't tell you what I think of you!"

"You needn't," drawled Kendal, "it wouldn't make any difference. When are you going to resign?"
 "I'll put a paper on the notice-board this evening."
 "That's good enough!"
 Without a word more Kendal quitted the study. The captain's scornful glance followed him, and, in spite of his nerve, Kendal did not care to meet it.
 Half an hour later a curious crowd was collected in front of the school notice-board. Pinned upon it was a paper in the bold, strong hand of the captain briefly announcing the fact that he had resigned the captaincy of Headland School.
 No explanation was given, and a crowd of seniors went to his study to demand one. They found that he had gone out.
 The doctor passed the notice-board and read the notice, and his brow contracted a little. The captain had not consulted him in coming to his decision.
 When Frank came in he received a message that Dr. Lane wished to see him in his study.
 With an extremely uneasy feeling the captain of Headland presented himself before the doctor. Dr. Lane looked at him sharply.
 "What is the reason of your resignation, Meredith?" he asked.
 "I don't feel equal to the position, sir," said Frank, lowering his eyes. "There are a good many other fellows quite willing to fill it—Kendal, for instance."
 "I am not sure that Kendal would make so good a captain," said the doctor. "I suppose you have reflected before taking this step?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "I suppose you know your own motives best," said the doctor stiffly. "I will fix a date, then, for the election."
 And the same evening a note on the board in the doctor's hand announced that an election of the new captain would be held on the following Friday.
 To all questions and expostulations from his Form-fellows Frank remained deaf. He could not explain his real motives and he would not prevaricate, and so he was compelled to take refuge in silence, which hurt some of his friends and puzzled them all.
 "We shall have that boulder Kendal in as captain!" exclaimed Manners disconsolately. "As he's the doctor's ward, the Head'll back him up. You've let us in for a nice thing!"
 "I don't think the doctor will back him up," said Frank. "As for Kendal being his ward, that's got nothing to do with it. Besides, he isn't exactly his ward; he's just in the charge of the doctor because his father's in Central Africa."
 "Well, it amounts to the same thing, and I know he'll have a hard try to get in. He never forgave you for beating him at the poll last time. Who's going to put up against him?"
 "Why don't you put up yourself?"
 "By Jove, I will!" said Manners, struck by the idea. "I don't say I should cut much of a figure as captain of Headland, but I would keep the place warm for you, Frank. You're off your rocker at present, it's clear, but when you're on it again you can depend upon it I'll resign and let you in."
 Frank laughed.
 "Not at all! I hope you'll get in for your own sake."
 "But I mean it," declared Manners, "and I should like to keep that boulder out, anyway. You'll do some electioneering for me?"
 Frank looked undecided.
 "I don't know," he said; "perhaps I ought to keep clear of it as resigned captain." He was thinking of Gerald Kendal and how he would take it. "I don't think I shall vote at all, Manners; but you have my best wishes."
 "Right you are!" And away went Manners to announce himself as rival candidate.
 Kendal had already put in his name, and as yet no rival had appeared.
 The interval before the new election was short, and so the electioneering was brisk. Manners was generally liked in his

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own Form, and as he was a kind, easy-going fellow he was also popular with the Lower Form boys. As the late captain's special chum, too, he was likely to secure the votes of all Meredith's friends, whose name was legion.

Kendal, as soon as he knew that Manners had put up, scented a dangerous rival. His suspicious mind at once jumped to the conclusion that Meredith had planned Manners's candidature for the special purpose of disappointing him, and he sought an interview with the late captain.

His disagreeable look warned Frank that something unpleasant was coming. He prepared for it.

Kendal came at once to the point.

"Are you going to vote for Manners?" he asked.

"I am not going to vote at all," replied Frank quietly.

"You are backing up Manners, though."

"I am standing out of the thing altogether. You don't expect me to back you up, I suppose? As you acted in the interests of the school in forcing me to resign, you want the school to select the captain it thinks best. You don't want any influence exerted in your favour."

Kendal winced.

"Of course I want to get in if I can," he said. "I dare say I shall make as good a skipper as anybody else, Meredith. Look here, one good turn deserves another. I want you to back me up for the election."

Frank shook his head.

"I can't do it. If I did it wouldn't be any use. I've already expressed in public my approval of Manners, and if I turned about and said the same for you, the fellows would think I was off my dot."

Kendal looked savage.

"You've been one too many for me," he said bitterly. "Still, Manners is your chum, and he'd withdraw if you asked him."

"He might, but I certainly shan't do anything of the kind."

"Won't you?" Kendal's face set grimly. "Have you forgotten that a word is enough to send the police to the cave to pick up your precious friend there?"

"I have forgotten nothing. We made a bargain; I've done my part, and I expect you to do yours."

"That's all very well; but it was understood——"

"Nothing was understood. You've got a fair chance, and you can't ask for more."

"Can't I?" Kendal clicked his teeth savagely. "I can see your game. You intend to keep me quiet till the election, to-morrow night, knowing very well that Manners will beat me. And to-night you're going to cut off to the cave and warn the convict to clear out."

"I shall certainly warn him."

"You'd better not. I'm not going to let my hold on you slip off so easily," said Kendal, with a sneer. "You won't go to the cave to-night."

"Who'll prevent me?" said Meredith, his eyes beginning to gleam.

"I will. You'll give me your word not to see the convict again till after the election, or I'll go straight to Mr. Darke now and tell him the truth." Frank Meredith breathed hard. "Darke will be glad to hear it," said Kendal mockingly. "He takes as deep an interest in this gaolbird as you do, only in a different kind of way. He's been spending all his leisure time in helping the police and the warders to hunt for him."

"Darke has?" ejaculated Meredith, in surprise.

"Yes; I fancy he would be glad to be able to take them the news I have to give him," said Kendal, with a grin. "Are you going to promise, Meredith?"

"Yes," said Frank, "I promise. And now get out of my room, you unspeakable cad, before I throw you out!"

And Gerald Kendal walked out of the room. Frank sank into his chair, but he did not turn to his books.

Had he made his sacrifice for nothing? He knew what was in Kendal's mind. The convict would remain in the cave, unsuspecting, and if Kendal lost the election he would set the law bloodhounds on the track. That was to be his revenge for Meredith's withholding his support.

But Frank could do nothing now. It was well known that he wished Manners to get in as captain, and if he changed sides without a reason to give, what would the fellows think of him? They would despise him, if they did not think him mad.

His situation was wretched. He could only hope that Kendal would be successful at the poll, and that his own chum would be defeated. At the same time he felt that the chances were great that Headland School would select Manners for its new captain. And what was to happen then?

CHAPTER 5.

The Rival Candidates.

ELECTION night. Excitement was keen at Headland School. The great hall was packed, the partisans of each candidature having whipped up every possible voter. Only one figure was absent—it was that of the late captain.

The proceedings were under the superintendence of Mr. Darke, and a teller was appointed for each side. When Manners was proposed there was a ringing cheer, and Gerald Kendal bit his lip. The volume of the cheer told him pretty clearly upon which side was the majority.

The counting was carefully done, till the forest of upraised hands were duly numbered, and a total of a hundred and thirty-two was declared for Manners.

Kendal bit his lip till the blood came. From the number of boys at Headland, it was certain that there were not so many left to vote for him. However, his partisans put it to the test of counting.

Slowly and surely the hands raised for Gerald Kendal were numbered, and the result was read out. Kendal listened with anxious face.

"One hundred and thirty-two votes for Manners, ninety-seven votes for Kendal. Harry Manners is duly elected Captain of Headland School."

There was a deafening burst of cheering from the backers of Manners.

The new captain, very red in the face, got upon his feet and made a little speech, somewhat confused and disconnected, but that was of no great consequence, as nobody heard a word of it. He was cheered till the hall rang again, and in the midst of the jubilation Kendal left the room.

The boys poured out after him in a noisy crowd, bearing Manners in their midst. Mr. Darke went to his study, and Kendal followed him there with a white, savage face.

"Come in," said the master of the Sixth, looking at Kendal in some surprise. "Do you want to speak to me?"

"Yes, sir."

Kendal stepped into the study and closed the door, a proceeding which the master viewed with some amazement.

"Well, what is it, Kendal?" he asked sharply.

His manner was always a little acid towards Kendal. He had never seemed to like the boy, but Kendal did not care for that now. He knew that what he was going to say would gratify Mr. Darke, but that was not his reason for speaking. He was thinking only of his revenge upon Frank Meredith.

He acted in a caddish way, for the sake of securing the coveted captaincy. It had been taken away from him, he felt, if not actually by Frank, at all events because Frank did not back him up. He would make Meredith "sit up" for it yet.

"I have something to tell you, sir," said Kendal awkwardly.

"Well, tell me, then."

"You want the warders to find the convict who escaped from Headland Prison the other day, sir," said Kendal, rather timidly.

Mr. Darke started.

"What do you mean? How do you know anything about it?" he demanded.

"I saw—I mean, someone told me——" stammered Kendal.

"Do you mean that you have seen the convict?" asked the master, a light breaking in upon him. "Is that what you mean? If so, tell me at once. I am, of course, eager to serve the ends of justice." He sprang to his feet. "Have you seen him?"

"I have not seen him, sir, but Meredith has."

"Meredith!"

"Yes. The convict is hiding in the sea-caves under the headland, and Meredith has been taking him food. He broke bounds on Wednesday night to go down to the cave."

Mr. Darke stared at him in blank amazement.

"Are you dreaming or romancing, Kendal?"

"It's true, sir. I followed him, and saw him light the lantern he left in the cave, and speak to the convict."

"You are sure it was the convict?"

"I couldn't see him very clearly, sir; but I could see his clothes, and there was the broad arrow upon them."

A savage satisfaction had come into the master's face. Kendal's manner showed that he was speaking the truth. Mr. Darke was already hurrying on his overcoat.

"Thank you, Kendal! You have done quite right. You——" Mr. Kendal broke off and stared at Kendal, as a new thought seemed to strike him. He broke into a harsh, unpleasant laugh. "You don't know who this convict is, Kendal?"

"Of course not, sir."

"No, of course not"—Darke chuckled—"of course not."

"I expect Meredith will go to warn the convict, sir," said Kendal, at a loss to account for the master's strange manner. "He'll guess I've come to you."

"Will he? I must see him and—no, that will be a waste of time. Kendal, will you go to the village station and send

ANSWERS

ONE PENNY.

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the police to the cave. I shall go straight there, and see that no warning reaches the convict, and that he does not get away. Tell them that, and tell them to hurry. There is no time to lose. Take your bike."

"Yes, sir," said Kendal, hurrying from the room.

Mr. Darke put on his hat, and, clearing the stairs three at a time, hastened out of the school-house. A minute more and he was striding rapidly away through the winter evening towards the headland.

Kendal went to the bike-shed for his machine. As he wheeled it across the Close, Frank Meredith came quickly up to him.

"I've been looking for you, Kendal," he said.

"Have you?" said Kendal coldly. "I'm in a hurry."

"Where are you going?"

"That's my business."

Meredith gripped his shoulder savagely.

"Let me go, Frank Meredith!" said Kendal.

"Where are you going?"

"If you must know, I am going to the police, to set them on the track of your precious friend in the sea-cave," replied Kendal, with a sneer.

Frank set his teeth and turned towards the gates. Kendal laughed mockingly.

"It's no good, Meredith."

Frank swung back quickly.

"What do you mean, Kendal?"

"I mean it's no use your going to warn your friend," said Kendal, with an insolent laugh. "I have told Darke, and he's gone to the cave to see that the rascal doesn't get away. He's got the start of you by ten minutes, so you may as well give it up."

Frank Meredith stood motionless for a moment. Then his arm came up, and he struck out, straight from the shoulder, a blow in which the anger and indignation of days was concentrated. Gerald Kendal went down with a crash, and his bicycle clattered away and rolled over.

Frank did not stay to look at him. With rapid strides he reached the gate and passed out, and started down the lane. He broke into a run as he turned his face toward the headland. There might be a chance yet.

Gerald Kendal picked himself up dazedly, muttering savage words, and wheeled his machine into the road, and mounted. He set off at a scorching pace for the village, and in a few minutes he was at the little police-station with his news.

Frank Meredith ran on swiftly through the dim night. He knew that Kendal would not be long in bringing the police, and there was no time to be wasted. How could he circumvent the man who was ahead of him on the road—the Headland master who showed such an inexplicable animosity towards the hunted convict?

His brain worked rapidly as he tore on, but he could think of no plan. His footsteps rang on the shingle. He stumbled, and stumbled again, but recovered his footing and ran on.

He was close to the cave now. The headland and the sea-caves were wrapped in blackness. There was no glimmer of light from the caverns under the cliff. Where was Mr. Darke?

As Frank asked himself that question, there came a sudden thrilling cry from the night:

"Help! Help!"

For a second Frank stood rooted, while dread visions flashed through his alarmed, excited brain. It was the voice of Mr. Darke. Had the interfering master met the convict? Was the hunted man fighting for his liberty? Was a deed of violence being done there in the blackness of the caves? Frank shuddered.

"Help! Help!" fainter now the cry, with a ring of agony in it. "Help! Help!"

He shook off, with a strong effort, the horror that was fastening upon him, and ran forward.

CHAPTER 6.

Father and Son.

AND what was happening in the darkness of the cave under the headland?

Unconscious of the anxious boy following fast upon his track, Mr. Darke raced down the shingly path to the cave. His eyes were burning as he ran; a malicious satisfaction was in his hard face.

He stopped, panting for breath, as he stood within the cave. The place was strange to him; the darkness was intense. He stood, breathing thickly, striving to pierce the gloom with his eyes.

A glimmer of light far up the cave caught his eye as he stood intently gazing—the reflection on the rock of a lantern afar off in the cave.

"It's true, then!" Some doubt of Kendal's tale had perhaps lingered in the master's mind. "It's true! The convict is here!"

He smiled exultantly.

The hunted man was there, all unsuspecting, and here was his enemy, watching the only way he could escape from the cave; while already on the road to the headland were the police and the prison warders!

"Your span of liberty is a short one, my friend," murmured Mr. Darke—"shorter than the last! You are in the toils."

And he advanced into the cave, drawing cautiously near to the light. It was possible that there was some other outlet by which the convict might flee when the alarm was given, and Darke intended to be close upon him at that moment to intercept his flight.

He felt his way cautiously. He felt with his foot in advance each time before taking a step. Suddenly he felt his foot slip on a mass of wet seaweed. He drew it back, but stumbled at the same moment. His other foot slipped, and he made a desperate effort to regain his balance. In vain! He fell blindly in the darkness, but not upon the rocky floor of the cavern. He fell into space, with a wild, ringing shriek that woke every echo in the hollows of the cliff.

Down he went with a rush that choked his breath, and a terrible scream of agony floated up from the blackness. Then a still more terrible silence fell upon the cave.

A light came flashing from the gloom; a voice called out. A man in the hideous broad-arrow garb appeared, lantern in hand.

He stopped wonderingly close by the crevice into which Darke had fallen. A sound came from below that made him start and shiver.

"Help! Help!"

It was the yell of a man in anguish and despair. The convict stared as if fascinated into the darkness at his feet.

"Help! Help!"

"Great Scott," muttered Convict 27, "I know his voice! It is he!"

He stood hesitating on the brink of the chasm. A struggle was going on in his mind, visible in the spasmodic working of his features. From below came a deep groan, echoing eerily through the gloom. The sound seemed to decide the hunted fugitive from Headland Prison.

He turned away along the edge of the rift and reached the extremity of it, where the descent, though steep, was not precipitous; and, holding the lantern in his hand, he commenced to descend carefully into the black depths.

Active and daring as he was, it occupied some minutes for him to descend to the bottom of the crevice. He moved along in the direction of the groaning man. The crevice was wet, and there were pools and puddles in the hollows of the rock, but that was all. It was not flooded by the tide.

The convict flashed the light about him as he advanced. The rays fell upon the hapless man, lying on his side amid the boulders and splinters of rock. His face was contracted with agony, and there was blood upon it in ghastly streaks, and upon his clothing and upon the stones round him. He turned his eyes upon the man with the lantern and started.

"You!"

"Yes, I, Henry Darke! The man you have wronged—the innocent man you sent to a convict prison to hide your own crime!"

The wretched man groaned. The convict stood gazing at him, and his expression somewhat softened; for it was evident that Darke was very near to death.

There was a sound in the cave above.

"Mr. Darke, where are you? What has happened?"

The convict rose and flashed the light above his head. He knew Frank Meredith's voice.

"Take care!" he called out. "It is death to fall!"

"Where is Mr. Darke?"

"He is here."

"Not—not—"

Frank faltered and broke off.

"I have not harmed him," said the convict, understanding the boy's alarm. "He fell into this crevice in the dark. But he came, I believe, to harm me."

"Fly!" cried Frank. "The police are coming! Gerald Kendal has betrayed you!"

"Gerald Kendal! Merciful heavens!"

"They may be here any moment. They will cut along the beach from the village, and it will not take them longer than it took me to come. Hurry!"

The convict, leaving the lantern beside the injured man, was already climbing the steep rocks. But it was some minutes before he stood panting beside Frank Meredith.

Frank gave a cry of despair.

"Look!"

There was a flashing of lights in the cave towards the sea. Five or six figures came into view—police and warders—with a boyish figure in the lead. Half a dozen lanterns illumined the cave far and wide.

"DAILY MAIL"

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As Meredith spoke the warders caught sight of the convict.

"There he is! Surrender, Twenty-seven!"

There was a rush, and he was surrounded. Flight was impossible now. And the sight of the boy with the police seemed to have petrified the convict. He stood rooted to the ground, his eyes fixed dazedly upon Gerald Kendal.

The warders' grip was upon him.

"Got you!" said the chief warder, with grim satisfaction.

"Thought we should have you. I don't know but what you might have led us a longer dance but for the kid. You won't get away this time, Twenty-seven, my man!"

The handcuffs clinked on the convict's wrists. He shuddered.

"Take me away!" he said hoarsely. "Take me away quickly!"

The warder looked at him curiously.

"No such hurry. There's a chap here came to look for you. Where is he? Have you done him in, Twenty-seven? I don't see him."

"Mr. Darke has fallen into the crevice," said Meredith.

The warder looked at him suspiciously.

"Did you see him fall in?"

"No; but——"

"Perhaps Twenty-seven knows how he got in, then," sneered the warder. "This may be a murder charge. Keep him tight, boys, while I go down."

The police had come provided with ropes. A couple of them began to lower the chief warder, lantern in hand, into the rift.

Meanwhile, Gerald Kendal had drawn nearer the convict, curious to look at the man he had been the means of sending back to a life in death. He looked hard at the worn, haggard face, and the colour gradually deserted his own.

Frank Meredith looked at him in wonder.

"What's the matter, Kendal?"

Kendal took no notice.

"Who are you?" he said hoarsely, staring at the convict.

"In Heaven's name, who are you? I know your face. It is exactly like the portrait I have of my——"

The convict gave a groan.

"My-poor boy!"

Kendal clenched his teeth.

"What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

"I have prayed to God that you should never know," said the man, in a low voice. "But now the secret need not be told, Gerald. Meredith will keep it; no one else need know a word. My poor boy! But, believe me, I was innocent. Dr. Lane believed that I was innocent, and when my disgrace fell upon me, Gerald, he was true, and he took you, and——"

"You are mad! My father has a post in Central Africa," said Kendal shrilly. "He——"

The boy broke off, realising the futility of his words. He knew now that that was only a fiction; that his father stood before him.

"I was innocent, Gerald! Before Heaven, I was innocent, and the guilty man was Henry Darke—the man who came here to hunt me down, and who lies at the bottom of that crevice!"

Kendal stood like one stunned.

"This was the end of his spite and malice—he had hunted down his own father and delivered him into the hands of his enemies!"

The boy groaned aloud in anguish of spirit.

During this strange scene the police were busy. Four men had descended into the crevice, and between them they carried the injured man up the steep slope at the extremity of the rift, and laid him upon the floor of the cavern. Darke was deadly white, and his eyes were feverish. One of the men was hurriedly despatched to the village for a stretcher. Darke lay breathing with evident effort, and the faces round him were grave, for it was easy to see that he had not long to live.

He looked at the handcuffed convict, and a bitter smile came upon his colourless lips.

"So they've got you!"

"Yes," said Hubert Kendal quietly, "they've got me."

"And yet you do not ask me to speak?"

"Will you speak?"

"Yes."

There was a pause. The injured man seemed gathering his strength for an effort. His lips moved again, and all bent to listen.

"I call upon you all to witness my words." His voice was low but clear. "Hubert Kendal was innocent of the crime laid to his charge. I alone was guilty! I contrived to cast the blame upon him, partly because I disliked him, partly to save myself."

"And you helped us to hunt for him!" muttered the warder involuntarily.

A cynical look came upon the ghastly face.

"I knew that if he was free there was danger of the truth coming to light," said Darke faintly. "That was my reason. If I were going to recover now I should say nothing. But—but I know that I am dying. All of you witness my words. I was guilty, and Hubert Kendal was innocent! I came here to track him down and watch against his escape, and I fell into the crevice. God have mercy upon me a sinner!"

His eyes closed.

There was a deep silence in the cavern. Gerald Kendal drew nearer to his father and clasped his hand. The convict pressed it hard.

"Heaven has been very merciful to us," he whispered.

It seemed an age before the stretcher arrived, and the village doctor with it. The doctor shook his head at the sight of Darke. It was evident that there was no hope. The injured man was placed upon the stretcher, and with him and their prisoner the police made their way out of the cave under the headland.

The two boys turned their steps towards the school. Several times Gerald Kendal glanced at Frank as they walked on in silence, and his lips moved. At last he stopped and spoke.

"Meredith, I've had a lesson to-night that I don't think I shall ever forget. I—I've acted towards you like a rotten cad! I've been punished as I deserve. Will you look over it and let bygones be bygones, and let us start fresh?"

Frank Meredith held out his hand.

"With all my heart," he said cordially. "And I'm jolly glad to hear you speak like that, Kendal!"

Kendal pressed his hand, and they finished the walk in silence.

The story of what had happened at the sea-cave, of course, made a sensation at Headland School. Kendal's part of the story was mostly kept unsaid, and no one knew the part he had played in Meredith's resignation. That resignation was soon rendered null, for Manners kept his word. He resigned, and a new election took place, in which Gerald Kendal voted for Frank.

Mr. Darke survived a few days, and confirmed the confession in the cave, and at length Hubert Kendal was released "without a stain on his character." Gerald never forgot the lesson of that night, and to-day he is one of the firmest friends of Frank Meredith, the captain of Headland School.

THE END.

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THE FOURTH FORM

AT
GREYMINSTER

BY
HENRY ST. JOHN.

THE HONOURABLE HERBERT HAVILAND . Third son of Lord Carringford.
TOM ANDREWS A poor boy and an orphan. He is adopted by Sir George Dalton.
 Mr. **TERENCE**, the New Headmaster, Mr. **GRINDLAY**, **WICKERS**, and other boys of the Fourth Form.

READ THIS FIRST.

Herbert Haviland and Tom Andrews first meet in a train, which is taking the former to school and the latter to sea. They change clothes, etc., and Andrews gets out at Greyminster station, while Haviland goes on to a seaport. Tom Andrews has not been at the school long when he saves two lives. Time slips by, but nothing is heard of Herbert Haviland until one day he comes to the school. The facts of their change come out, but directly Sir George Dalton—one of the local governors of the school—hears the story, he decides to adopt Tom Andrews. Mr. Grindlay, Tom's form master, who had up to now been toadying to Andrews, under the impression he was the son of a peer, suddenly changes. Herbert Haviland gets an old shipmate to come to Greyminster and impersonate Mr. Grindlay's father. The enraged Mr. Grindlay concludes that this man—Mr. Bunt—is an old friend of Andrews, so he goes to Sir George with a tale which is likely to injure Tom. He tells the baronet that he heard Andrews say, after falling down and tearing his trousers, "Never mind, the old fool can buy me another pair!" Sir George Dalton consults Mr. Terence, and the whole thing is proved to be a wicked lie. Now go on with the story!

Sir George Hints at His Intentions.

"Ha! I'm so glad Tom Andrews is cleared, and appreciates my small kindness! Shake hands on it," said Sir George. "Terence, I am a lonely, childless, old man. Not so old, either, but—well, I am no longer a youth, no mere stripling—eh, Terence?"

"No," said Mr. Terence; "certainly not."

"And there's no knowing. There's no one to come after me, Terence."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Terence, abstractedly.

"What do you know about it?" said Sir George.

"Nothing—nothing. I beg your pardon. I was thinking of something else," said Mr. Terence.

"Well, Terence, as I say, there's no one in the world, except my aunt, and may Providence forbid that she should ever take it into her head to come this way again; as I say, there's no one, no kith and kin in the world to me, and there's no knowing what I may do if that young fellow Tom turns out right, Terence. It would be a comfort to me if he turned out right, Terence."

"Yes, Sir George; I quite understand," said Mr. Terence. "I think that your idea is both kind and wise. I believe the boy to be worthy in every way; but time will prove. We shall see."

"Exactly," said Sir George; "that's what I mean. If he turns out right, Terence, there'll be a future before him."

And so Sir George took his departure; and Tom never guessed how his worldly affairs were prospering, or how entirely the outlook had changed for him. A few weeks ago a penniless outcast, a forlorn nobody, without a friend in the world, a waif, a leaf whirled this way and that on the current of life, at the mercy of the tide and the stream, and to-day—

But he did not know yet. He was content in the knowledge that his patron and friend still believed in him, and that all was well between them.

Mr. Grindlay Resolves to Do Better Next Time—Brownlow Has An Idea.

That evening Mr. Terence sent for Mr. Grindlay, and had a little conversation with him.

"Sir George Dalton called here this morning, Mr. Grindlay," he said.

"Indeed! Of course, I remember; I saw him myself during that most unpleasant experience."

"Yes," said Mr. Terence; "and it was another very unpleasant matter that brought him here."

"You surprise me!" said Mr. Grindlay.

Mr. Terence smiled grimly.

"I am sorry to say someone had been trying to poison Sir George's mind against that lad Andrews."

"Good gracious me!" said Mr. Grindlay. "How very odd!"

He did not wince, he did not change colour, he did not show the slightest sign of embarrassment, and Mr. Terence, looking at him, wondered.

"It was, I regret to say, a very cowardly attempt to undermine Sir George's liking for the boy; but I am delighted to say the attempt failed signally!"

"Ah," said Mr. Grindlay, "yes! Failed, you say; indeed. Well, I am delighted to hear it!"

"I thought you would be," said Mr. Terence. "I felt sure you would be delighted, Mr. Grindlay."

"I am, quite," said Mr. Grindlay—"quite! May I ask details?"

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"Oh, with pleasure!" said Mr. Terence affably. "It seems that some cowardly, venomous creature, whose name Sir George refused to mention—"

"Ah!" said Mr. Grindlay. "He refused to mention the name? How very odd!"

"Yes; he refused to mention the name," said Mr. Terence. "I say that some malicious, venomous, ill-natured creature, who had possibly taken a dislike to the lad, or who was seeking to curry favour on his own account with Sir George—and, on second thoughts, it strikes me as being quite possible that that matter might have been his object—"

"It is not unreasonable to suppose so," said Mr. Grindlay calmly. "Very likely some boy who was jealous of Andrews' good fortune in securing so generous a patron."

Mr. Terence nodded impatiently. The man's deception and the calm manner of his lying disgusted him. Mr. Terence was a man who had complete control of himself, otherwise he might have felt a strong inclination to kick Mr. Grindlay out of the room. As it was, he folded his hands together, and leaned back in his chair, keeping his eyes fixed on Mr. Grindlay's face.

"This person, whoever he might be, sought out Sir George, and told him some malicious untruths about Andrews, with the intention of setting Sir George against the boy, and withholding further favours from him. It was a most dastardly and evilly-thought-out scheme, and one that nearly succeeded; but I am glad to say that, by the exercise of a little common-sense and a little judgment, I completely proved to Sir George's satisfaction that he had been duped."

"Ah," said Mr. Grindlay, "indeed! And—and how was it done?"

For the first time his face changed colour. It was not a pleasant thought that Sir George knew he had been duped. Sir George held a strong and powerful position. He was not the man to play with with impunity; and Mr. Grindlay was devoutly wishing he had left Tom Andrews' name alone.

"It was told Sir George that when Andrews fell down and cut the knees of his trousers, he rose and made some offensive remark about the ease with which he would get more clothes from Sir George, and that Sir George being a rich man, he did not see why he should not benefit by his money as well as anyone else. This remark was couched in the most offensive terms, and rendered more so by the base ingratitude which prompted it."

"Is it possible?" said Mr. Grindlay.

"No; it was not possible—not to Andrews. The boy is deeply grateful to Sir George, and it is quite impossible that he ever spoke in the way that was reported. But the person who told the tale was, after all, a poor liar, Mr. Grindlay—a very poor liar! Cunning and malicious though he might be, he had not the brain to make a good story of it. He told the story, but forgot the facts of the case. And, Mr. Grindlay, the truth was very easily proved—very easily, indeed!"

Mr. Grindlay squirmed on his chair.

"I am delighted to hear it!" he gasped.

"I thought you might be," said Mr. Terence. "An examination of the knees of all the trousers that Andrews possesses proved the fact that none of them had been cut, or in any way injured!"

"Good gracious me, I never thought of—of—I mean how very clever of you, Mr. Terence, to hit upon such a good way of showing it up! How very clever! I am sure great credit is due to you. Andrews ought to be very grateful to you for being so good a friend to him!"

"I think he is," said Mr. Terence. "I know that the boy is deserving of protection, and I shall consider him under my protection for the future, and if I find any renewal of this blackguardly attempt against him, I shall deal sternly indeed with the offender, so sternly, Mr. Grindlay, that he will wish devoutly that he had left Andrews alone!"

"Ah, indeed! You will, of course, expel the boy?"

"The boy! I don't understand!"

"The boy who has been telling these wicked untruths!"

"Ah, yes; the boy! Scarcely a boy, I think, Mr. Grindlay!"

"Dear me! Do you suspect one of the servants?"

"I believe I do! One who is employed here! That is all, Mr. Grindlay. I thought you would like to hear the facts of the case."

"Yes; I thank you! I have been much interested!"

Mr. Grindlay rose and went out. When he got on the other side of the door he clenched his fists, and shook them in the direction of Mr. Terence's room. Then Mr. Grindlay muttered something under his breath that no master should ever have given utterance to.

"Clever; isn't he very clever?" he sneered to himself. "But I'll beat him yet. I was a fool. I did not give the matter enough thought. I did not think that we should have to deal with a man with a private detective's turn of mind. I am sure Terence would be much better employed at that sort of work, for which he shows an aptitude. But it's his

wits against mine! A match"—Mr. Grindlay rubbed his hands together—"a match between us—his brain against mine! We shall see. Next time I will be more careful; my plans will be better laid. I will crush Andrews—crush him hopelessly!"

He ground his teeth together. He was in a worse temper than usual. All that was malicious and base in the man was uppermost at that moment. He had been defeated and he took defeat very, very badly.

"Next time there shall be no loophole of escape!" he muttered to himself.

Tom had told his story to Haviland, and Haviland had jumped to a conclusion at once.

"It was Grindlay who tried to turn the old chap against you. There's a brute for you—eh?"

"I think so. I don't like to say so for certain sure," Tom said; "but I don't know no one else who'd 'a' done it, except him."

"There's no one else. Of course, Finch and Brownlow and that lot are rotters, but I don't think they would do a thing of that kind. Besides, I don't suppose Sir George would listen to them if they wanted him to. We'll get even with Grindlay, the beast, somehow! You leave it to me. We've been giving him a time of it with his father, ain't we? But we aren't done with him yet, Andrews, not by a long sight!"

Finch and Brownlow could not quite understand it. They had waited and they had watched; but the three—Haviland, Andrews and Weston—had attempted no further excursions after dark.

"You can take it from me," said Brownlow, "it was betting. It's a rotten place that Plough Inn! All sorts of bad lots go there. There's card-playing and betting on horses, and that sort of thing, I know." He nodded his head knowingly.

"What do you know, fathead?"

"Well, I know that they went there to bet. It's like this. Haviland's people go in for horse-racing. His father's a lord, and all lords bet on horses. That's where Haviland gets it from!"

"Gets what from?" inquired Finch.

"Why, the—what you call um—desire to bet money on horses," said Brownlow.

"H'm!" said Finch. "What else?"

"Well, it's as simple as pie," said Brownlow. "Haviland got those other two to go with him, and they went there and bet money on a horse for some race or other. I wonder if they lost?"

"I hope so!" said Finch evilly.

"I wish I knew for certain," said Brownlow. "It'd be something to know, wouldn't it?"

Finch nodded.

"We sha'n't know unless they go out again, and we nab 'em."

So the pair waited for night after night, and as Haviland & Co. showed no signs of taking a trip, they were disappointed.

At the end of a week—Mr. Bunt having returned to his humble home some considerable time since—Brownlow and Finch gave it up.

"I tell you what. Let's go and find out," said Brownlow.

"Go where?"

"To the pub, the Plough Inn."

"Us—you and me? What on earth for?"

"To find out. We can pretend we want to bet money ourselves, and say that Haviland sent us."

Finch put his hands into his pockets and whistled meditatively.

"It would be deuced risky, my young friend. Supposing we were copped?" he said.

"Well, there's always that to suppose; but supposing we weren't. It's good enough to risk. It would give us the whiphand over Haviland if we knew. We could let the beast know we knew a bit too much for him, and let him see we weren't going to put up with any of his airs. We'd make him sing small. Besides," added Brownlow cunningly, "the pig's got a lot of cash, one way and another!"

"What of it?" asked Finch.

"Oh, why—don't you see? Not that I want to get anything out of him; but he might make us little presents just to keep on the right side of us."

Finch nodded.

"I don't care a hang for his presents; but I'd like to get even with the brute. I'd like him to know we could do him down if we wanted to."

"That's exactly what I meant. Are you on?"

Finch hesitated a moment.

"Yes," he said briefly.

"How shall we manage it?" said Brownlow. "Shall we sneak off to-morrow afternoon when the chaps are up at footer, or shall we leave it till night?"

"I ain't going in the daylight," said Finch; "not me!"

Why, the beastly place is right on the road, and we'd be bound to be seen either going in or coming out. We'll go at night, and this time we're going to take jolly good care that we come back by the same way we go out. See?"

"Ah," said Brownlow, "rather! We don't want any more climbing trees business."

"Got any money?" asked Finch.

"Money? Not much—a tanner," said Brownlow.

"I've got a shilling. That's one-and-six. We could put the shilling as a bet, and buy beer with the sixpence. Of course, we shall be expected to buy beer."

"It's an awful lot of money to waste on beer," said Brownlow. "Besides, we don't want the muck!"

"Of course we don't; but we'll have to buy it, all the same."

"I suppose so," said Brownlow. "Well, that's settled, anyway. We'll find those beauties out, and then make 'em sit up!"

Finch and Brownlow Study Horse-Racing, and Mr. Grindlay Studies Finch and Brownlow—Finch Hunts for Trouble.

"I've been thinking," said Brownlow, "we ought to read up a bit about horse-racing, or we'll give ourselves away. So I've got a copy of 'The Sporting Man.' See?"

Finch nodded. He was beginning to have a better idea of Brownlow's sense.

"That's all right enough. We ought to know something, I suppose," he said. "Come and let's have a look at the thing."

The pair went off behind the fives-court, and selected a quiet corner.

"This is it," said Brownlow. "But I'll be hanged if I can make head or tail of it. Look here. What's this mean? 'Jumping Peter is scratched for the Dowsett Plate.' What's he scratched for? Strikes me the Society for Cruelty to Animals ought to know about it."

Finch nodded. He thought so, too.

"I've heard that they do all sorts of things to make cocks fight, and dogs, too—cut off their combs, and all sorts of beastly things."

Brownlow looked grave.

"Seems there's a lot of beasts about," he said indignantly. "I suppose they scratch the horses to make 'em run faster—that's what they wear spurs for."

"Shouldn't be surprised," said Finch. "It'd be like Haviland and his people—rotten lot—to go and mix 'emself up in that sort of thing."

"Look here," said Brownlow. "See this? 'Latest arrivals. Canute.' That's a rum go! I thought Canute was dead. Wasn't he the Johnny who didn't want to wash his feet, or something?"

Finch nodded.

"Can't make it out. I should say that chap who wrote this paper is a liar. It looks like it."

The two got their heads closely together over the pink sheet, and in a few minutes they were absorbed. It was all double Dutch to them. They read that among the latest arrivals somewhere or other was Canute, Mary Ann, and Uncle.

Tom then read that the Duchess had a bad sprain, and couldn't run.

"Motor accident, I'll bet," muttered Finch. "I suppose the thing caught fire, and she had to stop because she couldn't run, or something. I'll be hanged if I can make this thing out. It beats me!"

"Me, too," said Brownlow. "Look here, here's 'Latest London Betting.' That's what we want to know."

They got their heads very closely together again. So closely and so interested were they, that they did not hear a very soft footfall just behind them.

It was Mr. Grindlay. When Mr. Grindlay saw two boys interested in anything, he always scented mischief, and in this he was not usually wrong.

Now Mr. Grindlay was not a betting-man, but the pink sheet was so familiar that even he could make no mistake as to its identity.

"Dear me!" thought Mr. Grindlay. "The betting paper! How very odd!" He held his breath, and listened.

"Look here," said Finch, "there's a horse. It says 'Twenty to one taken and offered.' That means if you bet a shilling on it, and it wins, you will win twenty shillings. That would be a bit of all right, wouldn't it? That would be a sovereign between us. That's what we'll do when we go down to the Plough Inn to-night. We'll say we want to bet a shilling on—what's his name?"

"High Kicker," said Brownlow. "Best write it down, hadn't we?"

"Yes. High what?"

"Kicker."

Finch got out a pencil and a piece of paper and wrote it down—High Kicker. That the race in which High Kicker was to run was to be run that same afternoon, and that the result would be known long before they reached the Plough Inn, neither of the boys noticed, nor did they care.

"How shall we do it? What'll we say?" asked Brownlow.

"Oh, we go in and ask for some beer!" said Finch.

"We've got to do that, and then we'll say in an off-handed way, 'We want to bet a shilling, please, on what's-his-name—twenty to one,' and there you are."

Brownlow nodded.

"It'll be all right if it comes off, won't it!" he chuckled.

Mr. Grindlay looked horrified. He retired as softly as he had come, to collect his thoughts. In the first place, the two boys were reading a paper that only appealed to people who bet money on horse-races, as it seemed they did. Mr. Grindlay felt intensely pleased. He could see that it was as likely as not that this would be an expulsion matter, and he was glad to think that he would have a hand in it. He had suffered a good deal himself lately, and if he could be the means of bringing a little suffering to someone else, he would feel that he had not lived in vain.

"Going to the Plough Inn," he muttered—"to that disreputable place! Dear me, are they indeed? To the Plough Inn! I shall watch those two young gentlemen very closely. It is more likely than not that they will make their attempt to go to that terrible place after bed-time. Now I come to think of it, it was never very clearly explained how they came to be up and dressed that night when they were found in my room under the bed. I should not be at all surprised if they had just returned from one of their drunken orgies. Buying beer, indeed—two little wretches like them! Beer!" Mr. Grindlay snorted. "We shall see," he muttered.

Meanwhile, Brownlow and Finch studied the sheet attentively. They were learning a good deal. They were learning that Johnny Welshe had got knocked badly over the Dandy Welter, and they wondered who had knocked him, and what part of his anatomy the Dandy Welter was. "I suppose," said Brownlow, "it's a slang name for head, eh?"

"That's about it," said Finch. "And here's a rum-looking go: 'Little Nellie is proving herself to be exceptionally quick over the sticks.'"

Brownlow thought it was a joke, and giggled.

"I suppose that when they are going to whack her, she bunks for her life—and I don't blame her. 'Under the stick,' I should have thought would have been the best way of putting it."

"Hallo, reading about the horse-racing, eh?"

The two started guiltily, and turned to see Haviland looking at them. He had his hands in his pockets, and seemed to be amused.

"Didn't know you chaps went in for it," he said. "You're a couple of beauties, ain't you?"

Finch gathered up the paper and thrust it under his coat.

"Supposing you mind your own rotten business?" he suggested.

"All right, my son, I don't want to interfere, but it's a bad game. My pater always says so, though he's always at it himself. It's a mug's game, and if you take my advice, you'll chuck it."

"When we want your advice, Mr. Blooming Haviland," said Finch, "we'll ask you for it."

"All right, old chap. And when I give it, it'll be to give up betting. It's a mug's game; besides, it's pretty rotten low, isn't it?" said Haviland.

"You ought to know more about it than we do," sneered Finch. "And look here," he added, "don't you come and try to do the swell over us with your rotten advice. If you do, you'll get it jammed back in your jaw!"

"That's very nice," said Haviland. "I say, Andrews, come and listen to this bounder."

Tom came up, and the four collected together behind the fives court, and glared defiance at one another.

"Now let's hear what you've got to say," said Haviland.

"You've heard it once, and that's enough. If you start patronising us, you'll hear from me."

"How?"

"With my fist," said Finch.

"Oh!" said Haviland, smiling calmly. "Your fist! Let's have a look at it."

Finch clenched his fist in sudden fury.

"I'll let you feel it!" he shouted.

Brownlow looked round nervously. He did not care for fighting. It would be very much better if they all went away, and there was an end of it, so he tried to make the peace.

"We weren't interfering with you, were we, Haviland?"

"No; but you exist," said Haviland contemptuously. "I hate anything that crawls!"

NEXT WEDNESDAY:

"FORT TEMPEST,"

A Tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete,
By S. Clarke Hook;

AND

"ACROSS THE BORDER,"

A Splendid New Tale of Stanley Dare,
the Young Detective.

TWO GRAND LONG,
COMPLETE STORIES.

"You'll get crawl!" gasped Finch. "Outside, you rotten bouncer! Clear out!" He lost his head and his temper at the same moment, and made a wild dash at Haviland. His arms swung round like the sails of a windmill, his head was down to butt at Haviland like a goat. It was a very unwise proceeding altogether, and he was completely at Haviland's mercy. One upper cut would have stretched Finch out; but Haviland did not want to hurt him. Instead of hitting, he caught Finch's bullet head between his two hands, and gave him a sharp push backwards, and Finch sat down violently.

"Now, look here, don't be a fool! I could knock you all to pieces in two minutes," Haviland said. "Keep your temper better. I don't want to fight you."

(A long instalment of this splendid school story in next Wednesday's issue.)

Sandow Anecdotes

Incidents from the Eventful Life of Mr. Sandow.

No. 6.

The largest audience that had ever assembled in the Royal Aquarium witnessed the famous contest between Sandow and Samson. Samson first took an iron box and bent it over his calf, his arms, and his neck. This was more of a trick than a feat of strength, but Sandow easily repeated the performance.

Samson next took a wire cable, wound it round his chest, under his arms, and then broke it. This feat was well known to Sandow, and he easily equalled it. Samson then snapped a chain which encircled his arm, but objected to Sandow performing the feat with a chain he possessed. The judges decided that the chain was as strong as Samson's, and Sandow placed it on his arm and broke it.

Samson was still dissatisfied, so Sandow offered that if he could repeat his (Sandow's) performance with a dumb-bell he would declare the result a draw, and would not claim the £1,000.

Sandow then took a 280 lb. dumb-bell, he lifted it up with one hand, laid down, and finally stood up with it. He afterwards fastened some chains round his arms, took a 220 lb. dumb-bell, raised it to his chest, and burst the chains before releasing it.

Samson objected to the feats, but the judges were satisfied that Sandow had won the challenge, and he was promised the £1,000 on the following morning.

Sandow never received the money from Samson, and in the end accepted £350 from the management of the Aquarium. He was immediately offered an engagement at £150 a week, and his name became famous throughout the whole world as the strongest man living.

Any reader writing to No. 2, Sandow Hall, Victoria Embankment, London, W.C., will be forwarded a free copy of the booklet, "Sandow's Way to Strength," which shows how Sandow obtained his magnificent strength, and tells how readers may obtain splendid muscular development and robust health.

YOUR EDITOR'S WEEKLY CHAT.

All letters should be addressed, "The Editor, MARVEL,
2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London.

"JACK, SAM, AND PETE"

will be the three chief characters in next Wednesday's first long, complete story,

"FORT TEMPEST,"

a splendid tale of adventure, by S. Clarke Hook, which you must not fail to read.

The second, entitled

"OVER THE BORDER,"

is a thrilling tale of Stanley Dare, the young detective. This yarn will be of special interest to my Scot readers, as the scene of the story is laid in the land of the brae.

There will also be an extra long instalment of

"THE FOURTH FORM AT GREYMINSTER,"

by Henry St. John.

By the way, I should like you to drop me a postcard, saying what you think of our serial, also of the complete stories.

Look out for the announcement of the contents of the Christmas Double Number of THE MARVEL on this page next Wednesday.

Some pleasant surprises for you!

To E. Edwards, Stockingford, near Nuneaton.—Yes. Aston Villa bought him out of the Army direct.

R. J. Hickson, 44, Brunswick Street, Luton, Beds., has for sale (clean and complete) numbers 1-143 (new series) of THE MARVEL.

The same reader is willing to pay a good price for No. 58 of "Pluck" and No. 59 of "The Union Jack," both new series. Copies must be clean.

To W. Biddiss, Tabard Street, Boro', London.—"How to Make a Hand Camera," Price 4d., post free, from Publisher, Red Lion House, Red Lion Court, London, E.C.

To Joseph Caddy, Brindley Ford, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.—I will send you the eight numbers of "The Boys' Friend" Library, post free, on receiving remittance of two shillings and fivepence.

Others should take advantage of the above offer.

Now, in conclusion, let me remind all my readers who favour school stories that our companion paper, "Pluck," out next Saturday, will contain "The Rivals," a splendid, extra-long school tale, by Charles Hamilton, the author of "The Captain of the School," which appears in this number.

Everyone should read also "Pluck's" new serial, "Honour Bright," by Harry Belbin, author of the famous tales of the Captain, the Cook, and the Engineer.

YOUR EDITOR.

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S COVER.



This is a small reproduction of the picture that will appear on the cover of next Wednesday's MARVEL. Order your copy now. 3s pages. 1d.



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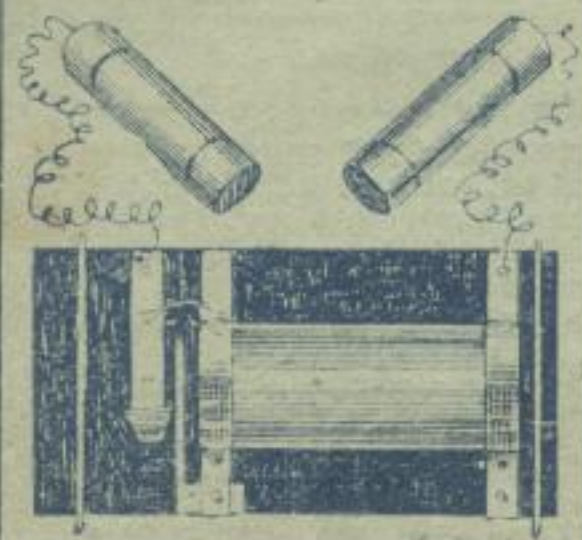
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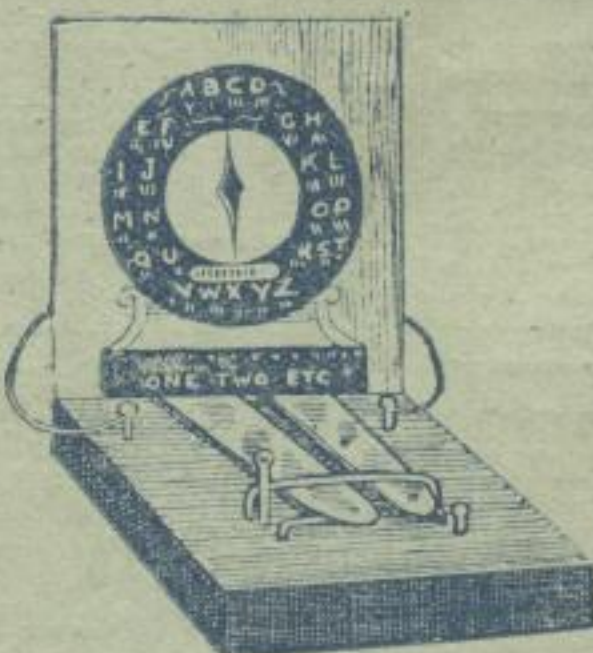
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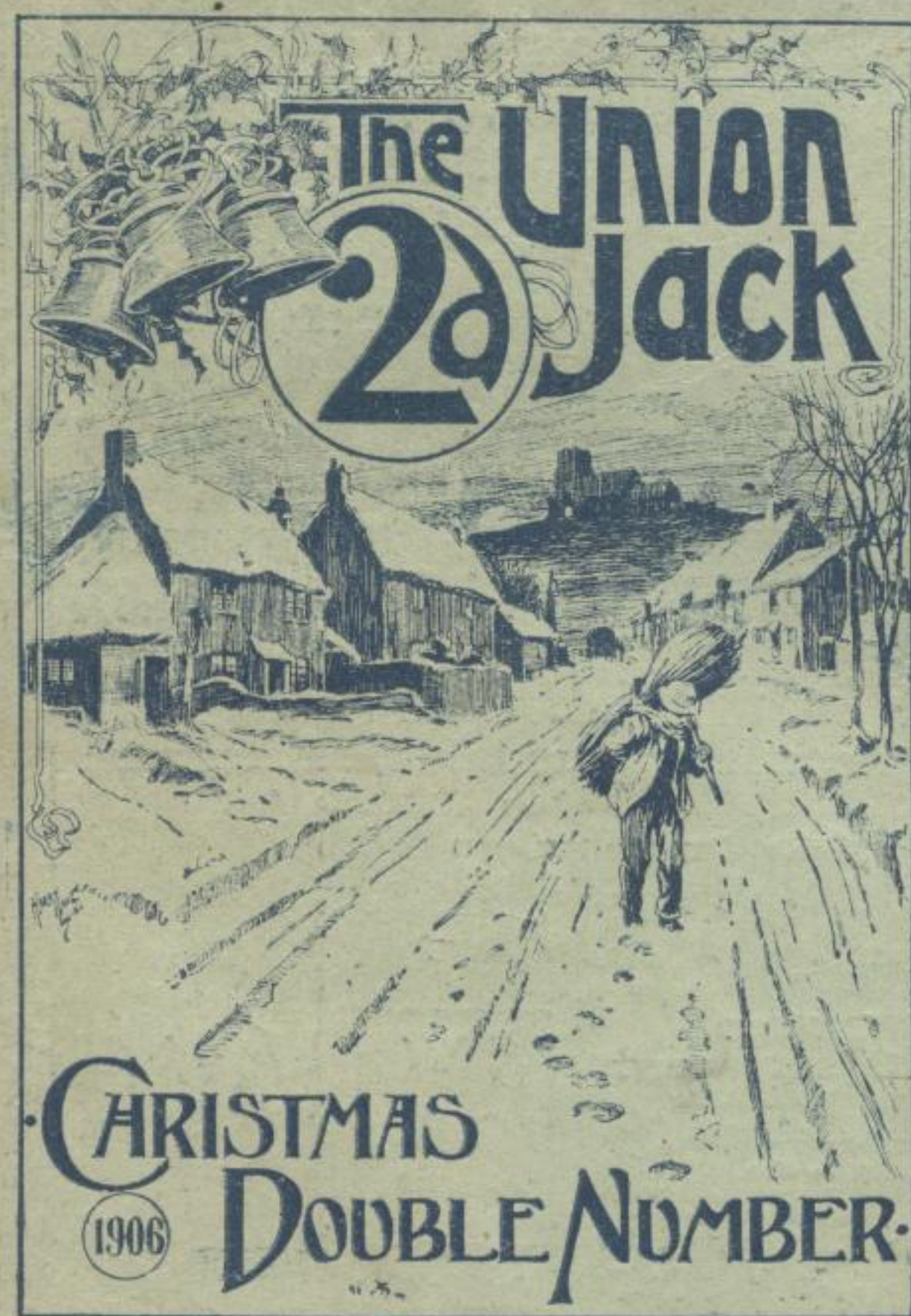


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